

From Dark Earth to Domesday: Towns in Anglo-Saxon England

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Boston College
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FROM DARK EARTH TO DOMESDAY: TOWNS IN ANGLO-SAXON ENGLAND
a dissertation

by
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Dissertation Abstract
From Dark Earth to Domesday: Towns in Anglo-Saxon England
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The towns that the Norman invaders found in England in 1066 had far longer and far more complex histories than have often been conveyed in the historiography of the Anglo-Saxon period. This lack of depth is not surprising, however, as the study of the towns of Anglo-Saxon England has long been complicated by a dearth of textual sources and by the work of influential historians who have measured the urban status of Anglo-Saxon settlements using the attributes of late medieval towns as their gage. These factors have led to a schism amongst historians regarding when the first towns developed in Anglo-Saxon England and about which historical development marks the beginning of the continuous history of the English towns. This dissertation endeavors to apply new evidence and new methodologies to questions related to the development, status, and nature of Anglo-Saxon urban communities in order to provide a greater insight into their origins and their evolutionary trajectories.

It is the argument of this work that the emporia of the sixth through nine centuries were indeed towns and that the *burhs* founded by Alfred the

Great and his heirs were intended from their inception to be towns and were quickly recognized as such by contemporaries. Two distinct methodologies are used to support these arguments: The first uses recent archeological and numismatic data related to the settlements in question to determine if the size and occupational make-up of their populations, the complexity and diversity of their economies, and their integration into regional and cross-Channel exchange networks sufficiently differentiated them from contemporary rural sites and places them in a distinct, urban category. The second methodology employs contemporary texts including the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, *The Old English Orosius*, and *The Old English Martyrology* to reveal the terms actually used by the Anglo-Saxons to describe their settlements and then compares those terms to the words used to describe places that the Anglo-Saxons would have definitively recognized as a town or a city, such as Rome or Jerusalem.

Regarding the continuity of Anglo-Saxon towns, recent archaeological data is used to prove that the periods of time which have often been cited as breaks in occupation were actually moments of transition from one type of town to another. At London, for example, we can now see that there was no substantive gap between the end of the extramural emporium of *Lundenwic* and earliest evidence for secular settlement within the walls of the former Roman town during the ninth century when it was refortified as a *burh*. This indicates that we should trace the continuous history of many towns, like London, back beyond Alfred and his *burhs*, to the emporia and other settlements that preceded them.

Another major theme that threads its way through this work is that the Anglo-Saxon towns were negotiated spaces defined by the interplay of different groups of people and different ideas. Kings and bishops certainly exerted a great deal of influence over the development of the Anglo-Saxon towns, but, by no means were they the only forces at work. The common craftsmen and traders who lived and worked in the towns and the lesser elites and royal officials who lorded over them shaped the physical and social environments of the towns, their regional and cross-Channel connections, and how their economies functioned. Different groups of foreigners also influenced the Anglo-Saxon towns through trade, evangelism, and, at times, violence. Moreover, in so much as any of these groups or individuals may have exerted a greater influence over the development of the Anglo-Saxon towns at one time or another, no single group—be it kings, bishops, elites, traders, craftsmen, or assorted foreigners—can ever be said to have been acting totally independently of the others. In short, this dissertation illustrates that the towns of Anglo-Saxon England were the products of complex networks that moved people, things, wealth, and ideas throughout regions and across seas.

For Jodi and Ronan

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	ii
List of Tables	iv
1. Defining the Town in Anglo-Saxon England	1
2. The New Towns and the New Economy	12
3. The West Saxon <i>Burhs</i> and the Development of Towns	51
4. Town Reeves and Royal Administration of Towns and Trade	74
5. Rebuilding Rome: Churches and Religious Houses in the Anglo-Saxon Town	100
6. Reconnected: Craft Production, Trade, and Towns in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries	132
7. Vikings and Normans	161
<i>Appendix A</i>	183
<i>Appendix B</i>	185
<i>Appendix C</i>	188
<i>Appendix D</i>	195
<i>Bibliography</i>	196

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List of Tables

<i>Table 3.1 Comparison of the Two Extent Versions of The Burghal Hidage</i>	67
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1. Defining the Town in Anglo-Saxon England

The title of this study, *From Dark Earth to Domesday*, lays out the period covered, from the sixth century to the Norman Conquest. The organization of the chapters is roughly chronological, although chapter five reaches back from the tenth century to immediate post-Roman era in order to provide the full context of the Church's participation in development of the Anglo-Saxon towns. The order of the chapters is intended to present a cohesive picture of the evolution of the Anglo-Saxon towns over time.

Methodologically, this study attempts to synthesize three types of evidence: the growing body of archaeological and numismatic evidence that has come to light in the last few decades, the extent charter and law code evidence, and the extremely underutilized literary evidence relating to the Anglo-Saxon towns. The aim of this study is to apply both new evidence and new approaches to some of the major questions concerning the development of the English towns before the Conquest and thereby provide greater insight into their origins and to argue for a longer evolutionary history for the Anglo-Saxon towns than is often considered. To begin this process, it is necessary to examine some of the fundamental questions faced by all studies of the Anglo-Saxon towns.

The nature of the *burhs* built by Alfred and his heirs, whether they were fortresses or towns, has been a central debate in the historiography of the Anglo-Saxon towns for well over one hundred years. In the early twentieth century, Frederick William Maitland presented his so-called “garrison theory,” arguing that Alfred’s *burhs* were nothing more than fortresses that provided the nuclei around which the later Anglo-Saxon towns formed.¹ In response, James Tait and Sir Frank Stenton proposed that the *burhs* were fortified towns equipped with all of the necessary appurtenances—a market, a mint, and a wall—to prepare them for their eventual maturity.² Despite the best efforts of Tait and Stenton to drive a stake through its heart, the specter of Maitland’s “garrison theory”—that the West Saxon *burhs* were intended to be nothing more than fortresses—periodically rises from the dead to haunt the debate over when and how towns developed in Anglo-Saxon England. As recently as 2010, Richard Holt challenged Martin Biddle’s and David Hill’s arguments in favor of the *burhs* being towns, countering, incorrectly in this author’s opinion, that the oft cited evidence from Worcester does not actually support such claims.³ Clearly, more than one hundred years after Maitland first presented his “garrison theory,” the debate over the nature of the *burhs* still endures.

Regardless of what side a given historian might ascribe to in the fortress versus town debate, there has been a general consensus that the *burhs* built by

¹ Frederic William Maitland, *Domesday Book and Beyond Three Essays in the Early History of England* (Cambridge, 1897), 190-2.

² James Tait, *The Medieval English Borough: Studies on Its Origins and Constitutional History* (Manchester, 1999), 20-7, F. M. Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford, 1971), 526-8.

³ Richard Holt, “The Urban Transformation in England, 900-1100,” *Anglo-Norman Studies*, XXXII (2010), 57-78, at 58-77.

Alfred and his heirs were the starting point of the continuous evolution of many of the later towns of medieval England.⁴ This narrative, unfortunately, has tended to force historians and archaeologist examining earlier settlements to shy away from any suggestion that there might be anything approaching an actual town prior to the late ninth century. The overwhelming influence of the historiography of the *burhs* has been problematic, in that has it colored the lens through which historians and archaeologists have examined the great emporia and the other lesser places of trade that existed before the ninth century.

When considering the emporia of the seventh through ninth centuries, particularly after the publication of Richard Hodges *Dark Age Economics* and the various excavation reports for the emporia at Southampton, London, and York, historians and archaeologists have been faced with the task of categorizing these sites and accounting for their limited window of occupation or their apparent hiatus during the ninth century.⁵ This conundrum has given rise to the use of such ambiguous phrases as “pre-urban” and “proto-urban” to describe the emporia by historians and archaeologist who, influenced by Maitland, Tait, and Stenton, were not entirely comfortable with the notion of a

⁴ David Hill, "The Origins of Alfred's Urban Policies," in T. Reuter (ed.), *Alfred the Great: Papers from the Eleventh-Century Conferences*, Studies in Early Medieval Britain, 3 (2003), 219-34, at 219-20.

⁵ Richard Hodges, *Dark Age Economics: The Origins of Towns and Trade, A.D. 600-1000* (London, 1982), 1, A. D. Morton, S. Davies and Phil Andrews, *Excavations at Hamwic* (London, 1992), 1, P. Andrews, *Excavations at Hamwic: Volume 2 Excavations at Six Dials* (York, 1997), 1, Gordon Malcolm, David Bowsher and Robert Cowie, *Middle Saxon London: Excavations at the Royal Opera House, 1989-99* (London, 2003), 1, Jim Leary and Gary Brown, *Tatberht's Lundenwic: Archaeological Excavations in Middle Saxon London* (London, 2004), 1, Richard L. Kemp, *Anglian Settlement at 46-54 Fishergate* (London, 1996), 1.

town without walls or a town before Alfred. The intellectual divide over the nature of the emporia can be found in the comprehensive and influential *Cambridge Urban History of Britain*, in which Genville Astill, Richard Holt, and Julie Barrow refer to the emporia as “proto-urban,” while James Campbell, David Palliser, and Derek Keene refer to the emporia as towns.⁶ The categorization of the major emporia as “proto-urban,” simply because they were not surrounded by walls or because we do not have textual evidence for a particular type of tenure, is somewhat dubious when the archaeological evidence indicates that they were, in fact, far larger, more complex, and more economically diverse than many of the later walled towns. An interesting contrast can be drawn with historiography of early colonial America where there were many towns, but few of them had walls. Historians of that region and period seemingly have no reservation calling undefended settlements towns.⁷

The aforementioned hesitancy to consider the existence of a town without walls, coupled with what John Moreland refers to as the “classic

⁶ Grenville Astill, “General Survey 600-1300,” in D. M. Palliser (ed.), *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain* (2000), 27-50, at 31-4, Richard Holt, “Society and Population 600-1300,” in D. M. Palliser (ed.), *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain* (2000), 79-104, at 79-80, Julia Barrow, “Churches, Education and Literacy in Towns 600-1300,” in D. M. Palliser (ed.), *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain* (2000), 127-52, at 127-30, James Campbell, “Power and Authority 600-1300,” in D. M. Palliser (ed.), *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain* (2000), 51-78, at 52-3, David Hinton, “Large Towns 600-1300,” in D. M. Palliser (ed.), *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain* (2000), 218-24, D. M. Palliser, T. R. Slater and E. Patricia Dennison, “The Topography of Towns 600-1300,” in D. M. Palliser (ed.), *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain* (2000), 153-86, at 158-9, Derek Keene, “The South-East of England,” in D. M. Palliser (ed.), *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain* (2000), 545-82, at 554-5.

⁷ Carl Bridenbaugh, *Cities in the Wilderness; the First Century of Urban Life in America, 1625-1742* (New York, 1938), 1, Sylvia Doughty Fries, *The Urban Idea in Colonial America* (Philadelphia, 1977), 1, James D. Kornwolf and Georgiana Wallis Kornwolf, *Architecture and Town Planning in Colonial North America* (Baltimore, 2002), 1.

model” of the emporia, in which the emporia are seen as outpost of long-distance trade that were founded and controlled by kings, has prevented historians and archaeologist from recognizing just how integrated the emporia were into regional economies.⁸ Chapter two examines the origins of the emporia, their economic complexity, their wider role in their regions, and argues that that they were much more than “proto-urban.”

The crux of both of these debates is the definition of what makes a settlement a town. This is an elemental question that can be, and has been, answered in any number of ways. Indeed, Martin Carver has argued that “the reason that specific urban definitions are so hard to draw from material culture, is that a town is not a species of artifact, but a species of idea.”⁹ The definition that has dominated much of the historiography is the one put forth by Sir Frank Stenton in his *Anglo-Saxon England* in 1943. Stenton states that “like ninth-century Canterbury the normal town of the Confessor’s reign was a market and minting place; it was enclosed with walls or an earthen rampart; it was divided into fenced tenements.”¹⁰ In this very concise sentence, Stenton both condensed the debates of his predecessors and framed the debate about the development of towns for the generations of historians who would follow. After Stenton, those historians looking for a town would be looking for a market, a mint, and walls.

⁸ John Moreland, “The Significance of Production in Eighth-Century England,” in I. L. Hansen and C. Wickham (eds.), *The Long Eighth Century* (2000), 69-104, at 69-80.

⁹ M. O. H. Carver, *Arguments in Stone: Archaeological Research and the European Town in the First Millennium* (Oxford, 1993), 2.

¹⁰ Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, 527.

In the second half of the twentieth century, as archaeology, anthropology, and geography began to influence research on English towns, new definitions of what constituted a town were put forward which use systems that score settlements against a set of criteria which included various “urban” functions or elements.¹¹ Perhaps the best known and most useful of these sets of the criteria, for historians of Anglo-Saxon England, is the one developed by Martin Biddle which states that a settlement may be considered a town if it had more than one of the following:

Defences	A relatively large and dense population
A planned street system	A diversified economic base
A market(s)	Plots and houses of ‘urban’ type
A mint	Social differentiation
Legal autonomy	Complex religious organization
A role as a central place	A judicial centre ¹²

Biddle’s test is quite useful, as it helps to differentiate towns from those specialized settlements, such as a monastery or a fortress, that were certainly not a village but were also not in and of themselves a town.

In stark contrast to the more methodological and elaborate schemes advanced by other historians, Susan Reynolds, in her *An Introduction to the History of English Medieval Towns*, put forth what is, perhaps, the simplest and best definition of a town:

¹¹ For a brief summary of these types of evaluations see Hodges, *Dark Age Economics: The Origins of Towns and Trade, A.D. 600-1000*, 21-5.

¹² Martin Biddle, “Towns,” in D. M. Wilson (ed.), *The Archaeology of Anglo-Saxon England* (1981), 99-150, at 99-150.

A town is a permanent human settlement with two chief and essential attributes. First is that a significant proportion (but not necessarily a majority) of its population lives off trade, industry, administration, and other non-agricultural occupations. In order to distinguish it from, say, a monastery or barracks or even a mining village, one should add that the inhabitants live off of a variety of occupations....

The second essential attribute of the town is that it forms a social unit more or less distinct from the surrounding countryside.¹³

Reynolds' definition is a practical, commonsense equation that does not impose anachronistic requirements drawn from later towns on the settlement in question. Reynolds definition is also important because it focuses on the population rather than the structural elements of the town. Both Biddle's and Reynolds' definitions offer historians and archaeologists a simple guide to what might be reasonably considered a town. Biddle's criteria are used in this study when there is a need to determine if a particular site should be considered a town based on known attributes. That said, when the word town is used in a general context, it is Reynolds' definition that best captures this author's intent.

Despite the number of modern definitions of a town floated by historians and archaeologists, one concept has been mostly absent from the historiography of the Anglo-Saxon towns and that is what the Anglo-Saxons actually considered a town. Even though some may debate the point, the Anglo-Saxons—be they king, craftsmen, or farmer—certainly had some understanding of what the different types of settlements they inhabited were.

¹³ Susan Reynolds, *An Introduction to the History of English Medieval Towns* (Oxford Eng., 1977), ix.

This study addresses that point in chapter three by examining the *The Old English Orosius* and other contemporary texts to determine just what the word *burh* meant to the Anglo-Saxons during the ninth and tenth centuries.

The problems of determining if there was any sort of continuity with their predecessors and establishing an overall evolutionary trajectory of Anglo-Saxon towns are in many ways dependent on the answer to the preceding question of what made a settlement a town. The earliest problem to consider is the whether there was any continuity between the late Roman towns and the later Anglo-Saxon towns that sprung up within their walls. Although there is some evidence for extremely limited and often transient occupation in some of the former Roman towns during the late fifth and sixth centuries, there is no evidence as yet for any persistent settlement in any of the former Roman *urbs* that could, in any way, be called a town.¹⁴ At most of the former Roman towns, layers of so-called dark earth covered much of the intramural areas, indicating unchecked waste disposal followed by abandonment and decay.¹⁵ Even at Canterbury, where Anglo-Saxon sunken-featured buildings dating to the fifth or sixth centuries have been found, no evidence has been recovered that would indicate that there was any significant continuity with its prior Roman

¹⁴ A. S. Esmonde Cleary, *The Ending of Roman Britain* (Savage, Md., 1990), 131-4, K. R. Dark and Petra Dark, *The Landscape of Roman Britain* (Stroud, Gloucestershire, 1997), 141-2, Neil Faulkner, "Change and Decline in Late Romano-British Towns," in T. R. Slater (ed.), *Towns in Decline, AD 100-1600* (2000), 25-50, at 42-6.

¹⁵ Richard Macphail, "Dark Earth and Insights into Changing Land Use of Urban Areas," in D. Sami and G. Speed (eds.), *Debating Urbanism within and Beyond the Walls A.D. 300-700: Proceedings of a Conference Held at the University of Leicester, 15th November 2008* (2010), 145-65, at 146-61.

incarnation.¹⁶ There was, however, an indelible influence exerted by the presence of their ruins and by the idea of the Roman towns that informed the Anglo-Saxon conception of towns as the *loci* of power. This influence is illustrated by the choice of Gregory and his early bishops to found their sees in the ruins of the former Roman towns. Chapter three examines the influence that the Roman towns had on Alfred the Great and his heirs, while chapter five examines the relationship between the Roman towns and the early Anglo-Saxon bishops.

The largest and most densely populated settlements to develop in Britain after the decline of the Roman towns were the great emporia at Southampton, London, Ipswich, and York and although these settlements sprung up in the shadows of Roman towns and fortresses, the only continuity shared was that of geography.¹⁷ The great emporia were situated at riverside sites, some of which were important prior to the arrival of the Romans in Britain, which offered practical advantages to both the Romans and the Anglo-Saxons who chose to build there. Indeed, the practical requirement of being able to beach boats may have been a key factor in Anglo-Saxons decision not to try to reuse the Roman towns for their emporia.¹⁸

¹⁶ Kevin Blockley, Marion Blockley, Paul Blockley, Sheppard Frere and Sally Stow, *Excavations in the Marlowe Car Park and Surrounding Areas* (Canterbury, 1995), 19-21, 8, 280-350.

¹⁷ Andrews, *Excavations at Hamwic: Volume 2 Excavations at Six Dials*, 242, Malcolm, Bowsher and Cowie, *Middle Saxon London*, 2-3, 192-3, Christopher Scull and Marion Archibald, *Early Medieval (Late 5th - Early 8th Centuries AD) Cemeteries at Boss Hall and Buttermarket, Ipswich, Suffolk* (Leeds, 2009), 305-16, Dominic Tweddle, Joan Moulden and Elizabeth Logan, *Anglian York: A Survey of the Evidence* (York, 1999), 193, 209.

¹⁸ Malcolm, Bowsher and Cowie, *Middle Saxon London*, 143.

The more difficult continuity to gauge is that between the emporia and the *burhs*. The interruptions and dislocations caused by the viking incursions of the ninth century make it difficult, but not impossible, to evaluate the connections between the emporia and the later walled towns that developed in their vicinity. Chapter six compares the secular settlement patterns and the status and occupations of the populations of the tenth- and eleventh-century towns with those of the earlier emporia to gauge the possibility of any sort of relationship between them.

Both of the preceding questions, the origin of the Anglo-Saxon towns and the possibility of long-term continuity, as well as the significant question of the role of the Church in the development of the Anglo-Saxon towns, have all been raised by John Blair in his so-called “minster hypothesis.” In his *Church in Anglo-Saxon Society*, Blair argues that the predecessors of the *burhs* were Anglo-Saxon religious houses known as minsters.¹⁹ Chapter five deals with the role of the Church in the development of the Anglo-Saxon towns and addresses both the strengths and weaknesses of Blair’s argument.

The common thread that links most of the previously cited theories of town formation and all of the various definitions of what makes a settlement a town is trade. Despite the various proposed origins of the Anglo-Saxon towns, royal villis, fortresses, or minsters, the point to which almost all historians agree is that a settlement became a town when there was a significant segment of the population living off of trade or the production of trade goods,

¹⁹ John Blair, *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society* (Oxford; New York, 2005), 246-90.

even Maitland made some small concession towards the value of a market in a borough.²⁰ Indicators of intensive trade and craft production, therefore, are also viewed as key markers of a town in this work. Much of the earlier historiography, however, viewed trade as the eventual byproduct of other factors, such as the presence of a fortress, an elite residence, or a church or religious community, and in some instances that is completely plausible, but it fails to account for trade as causative factor in the development of towns. Interestingly though, trade is seen as causative factor in the development of the emporia. Due to the decline in the evidence for trade during the second half of the ninth century, the high level of trade that built the emporia is hardly ever connected to the development of trade in the later Anglo-Saxon towns. This disconnect is due in part to tendency to look backward from the towns of the late eleventh century rather than looking forward from the immediate post Roman period. This study, therefore, looks forward from the period of dark earth accumulation in the former Roman towns to the fully matured towns of the *Domesday* survey.

²⁰ Maitland, *Domesday Book and Beyond*, 192-6, Tait, *The Medieval English Borough*, 22-9, Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, 528-44, Reynolds, *An Introduction to the History of English Medieval Towns*, 27-42, Biddle, "Towns," 99-150, Hodges, *Dark Age Economics: The Origins of Towns and Trade, A.D. 600-1000*, 162-84, David Hill, "Towns as Structures and Functioning Communities through Time: The Development of Central Places 600 to 1066," in D. Hooke (ed.), *Anglo-Saxon Settlements* (1988), 197-232, at 207-12, Blair, *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society*, 246-90.

2. The New Towns and the New Economy

In the mid-eighth century, the emporia at Ipswich, London, Southampton, and York were extraordinary places with sprawling, densely-built settlement-areas and large populations that far surpassed other settlements in England. Moreover, they differed from their neighbors in that the vast majority of their numerous inhabitants made their living from some means other than agriculture. Along their metalled streets and alleyways, traders bought and sold goods and craftsmen plied their trades; all while cargo-laden boats came and went from their beaches and landing-sites and herds of cattle and sheep arrived from the hinterland to keep them fed. After a more than two-hundred year hiatus between circa 400 and circa 600, the emporia at Ipswich, London, Southampton, and York contained the first semblances of urban life in England. They were remarkable places indeed—they were towns—the first true towns of post-Roman Britain.

The uniqueness of these four emporia should not, however, be confused with isolation or insularity. Indeed the emporia at Ipswich, London, Southampton, and York should not be viewed as aberrations or anomalies but as the sum products of the collective economic impulses of the people who built them. Unfortunately, for far too long, the scholars who studied the early

emporia of Anglo-Saxon England lacked a wider context in which to properly place them, and this skewed their interpretations. To these archaeologists and historians, the emporia appeared to be great islands of trade and craft production in a rural, agricultural landscape devoid of almost any evidence of widespread participation in the complex, monetized trade that appeared to have a place at the emporia.¹ This lack of a discernable context tempered the earliest interpretations of the emporia and led to the supposition that they were novel, royal foundations planned and built *in toto* to supply foreign exotica to an economy constructed solely around elite gift exchange.² In the last thirty years, however, the work of archaeologist and metal detectorists has transformed our knowledge of the economy and settlement patterns of Anglo-Saxon England, and it is now possible to think about the emporia as the products of a much more complex and widespread set of historical phenomena.³ The dramatic increase in the volume of material and numismatic evidence that has come to light in recent decades confirms that these settlements developed in a rising tide of commercialization, monetization and increased craft production that was taking place in eastern and southern

¹ John Newman, "Wics, Trade, and the Hinterlands -- the Ipswich Region," in M. Anderton (ed.), *Anglo-Saxon Trading Centres: Beyond the Emporia* (1999), 32-47, at 33-4.

² David Hill, "150 Years of the Study of Wics: 1841-1991," in D. Hill and R. Cowie (eds.), *Wics: The Early Mediaeval Trading Centres of Northern Europe*, Sheffield Archaeological Monographs, 14 (2001), 3-6, at 4-6, Hodges, *Dark Age Economics: The Origins of Towns and Trade, A.D. 600-1000*, , Henri Pirenne and Frank D. Halsey, *Medieval Cities; Their Origins and the Revival of Trade* (Princeton, 1948),

³ Tim Pestell and Katharina Ulmschneider, "Introduction: Early Medieval Markets and 'Productive' Sites," in T. Pestell and K. Ulmschneider (eds.), *Markets in Early Medieval Europe: Trading and Productive Sites, 650-850* (2003), 1-10, at 1-7.

England.⁴ And the great emporia at Southampton, London, Ipswich, and York sat at the apex of a new settlement hierarchy that was evolving to facilitate this new complex economy.

The earliest decades of the emporia are still somewhat obscured, but we are now beginning to understand that they had far less planned and less elite origins than once thought.⁵ Utilizing archaeological evidence from the sites and their early cemeteries, Robin Fleming has shown that all the emporia of Anglo-Saxon England began life as poly-focal settlements of craft workers and/or traders grouped around discrete seasonal beach markets.⁶ Not surprisingly, these origins are quite similar to ones now being posited for many continental towns including Dorestad and Venice.⁷ Such early, poly-focal beach markets provided an opportunity for people to gather and exchange the fruits of their labor—or the labor of those who owed them tribute—for commodities produced by other communities in the region or even imported goods from across the Channel. Beginning circa 600, some of these traders and craftsmen chose to make their homes in the vicinity of these seasonal beach markets, laying the foundation for the later emporia.⁸ We know that at Ipswich these founding families included groups of traders from Kent and foreign merchants

⁴ Moreland, "The Significance of Production in Eighth-Century England," 76-104.

⁵ Hodges, *Dark Age Economics: The Origins of Towns and Trade, A.D. 600-1000*, .

⁶ Robin Fleming, "Elites, Boats and Foreigners: Rethinking the Birth of English Towns," in C. I. d. S. s. a. Medioevo (ed.), *Città E Campagna Nei Secoli Altomedievali* (2009), 1-33, at 17-26.

⁷ Joachim Henning, "Early European Towns. The Development of the Economy in the Frankish Realm between Dynamism and Deceleration AD 500-1100," in J. Henning (ed.), *Post-Roman Towns, Trade and Settlement in Europe and Byzantium: Volume 1: The Heirs of the Roman West*. (2007), 3-40, at 5-10, Michael McCormick, "Where Do Trading Towns Come From? Early Medieval Venice and the Northern Emporia," in J. Henning (ed.), *Post-Roman Towns, Trade and Settlement in Europe and Byzantium: Volume 1: The Heirs of the Roman West*. (2007), 41-68, at 47-61.

⁸ Fleming, "Elites, Boats and Foreigners," 22-30.

from Frisia and Francia as well as local households, a mix of peoples that further reinforced both regional connections and ties with trading communities across the Channel.⁹

Despite their modest beginnings, by the mid-eighth century Ipswich, London, Southampton, and York were all large and thriving centers of craft production and trade. They were settlements that, along with their rural counterparts, were being influenced and exploited by kings and elites who were exerting a far more market-oriented form of rule over the land and people under their command. The orderly alignment of new buildings and plots along the roads found in the emporia by the late-seventh century and the regular maintenance of some of these roads suggest the influence of some organizing, decision-making figure or figures at work in these towns, either local elites or royal reeves or both.¹⁰ It was these elites who, by the late seventh century, must have guided the growth of the emporia for their own benefit as well as that of the kings who allowed them this authority.

Ipswich, referred to in the texts as *Gipeswic*, was developed at the confluence of the Orwell estuary and the River Gipping on previously uninhabited land which may have served as a seasonal beach market for nearby fifth- and sixth-century settlements in the lower Gipping valley—including a possible high-status settlement in the vicinity of the Boss Hall cemetery.¹¹

⁹ Fleming, "Elites, Boats and Foreigners," 22-3.

¹⁰ Leary and Brown, *Tatberht's Lundenwic: Archaeological Excavations in Middle Saxon London*, 142.

¹¹ Scull and Archibald, *Early Medieval (Late 5th - Early 8th Centuries AD) Cemeteries at Boss Hall and Buttermarket, Ipswich, Suffolk*, 305-16.

Ipswich proper appears to have begun as a settlement of approximately six hectares at the turn the seventh century which then expanded rapidly in the eighth century.¹² This eighth-century expansion appears to have coincided with the establishment of the Ipswich-ware pottery industry.¹³ By the mid-eighth century, Ipswich had grown to cover some fifty hectares and had a population of approximately 2,000 people.¹⁴

The emporium at London, *Lundenwic*, was an extramural craft production and trading site just upstream of the ruins of Roman city of *Londinium*.¹⁵ The later emporium most likely developed out of a “small, possibly seasonal settlement,” which was established along the River Thames in the late-sixth or early-seventh century.¹⁶ Centrally located along the Thames and at the confluence of the network of Roman roads, *Lundenwic* was well situated to become the preeminent trading center of Anglo-Saxon England.¹⁷ At its height in the mid-eighth century, *Lundenwic* covered some sixty hectares along the Strand and was home to between 5,000 and 7,000 people.¹⁸ It was the largest settlement in England.

¹² Christopher Scull, "Ipswich: Development and Contexts of an Urban Precursor in the Seventh Century," in B. Hårdh and L. Larsson (eds.), *Central Places in the Migration and Merovingian Periods: Papers from the 52nd Sachsensymposium, Lund, August 2001* (2002), 303-16, at 304-8.

¹³ Scull, "Ipswich: Development and Contexts," 304.

¹⁴ Robert Cowie, Richard Kemp, Alan Morton and Keith Wade, "Appendix 1. Gazetteer of Known English Wics," in D. Hill and R. Cowie (eds.), *Wics: The Early Mediaeval Trading Centres of Northern Europe*, Sheffield Archaeological Monographs, 14 (2001), 85-94, at 97.

¹⁵ Malcolm, Bowsher and Cowie, *Middle Saxon London*, 2.

¹⁶ Malcolm, Bowsher and Cowie, *Middle Saxon London*, 2.

¹⁷ Katharina Ulmschneider, "Central Places and Metal-Detector Finds: What Are the English 'Productive Sites'," in B. Hårdh and L. Larsson (eds.), *Central Places in the Migration and Merovingian Periods: Papers from the 52nd Sachsensymposium, Lund, August 2001* (2002), 333-9, at 294-5.

¹⁸ Malcolm, Bowsher and Cowie, *Middle Saxon London*, 2-3, 192-3.

The emporium at Southampton, *Hamwic*, was located between the Rivers Test and Itchen, approximately 1.4 kilometers south of the ruins of the Roman fort of *Clausentum*.¹⁹ As with Ipswich and London, there is evidence to suggest that the origin of *Hamwic* can be dated to the mid-seventh century. Furthermore, it may be that this emporium evolved from an existing royal estate.²⁰ At its peak, the population of *Hamwic* was probably in the range of 2,000 to 3,000 people.²¹

York's emporium, Anglian *Eoforwic*, was located to the south of the old Roman fortress at the confluence of the Rivers Ouse and Foss.²² The most recent archaeological data suggest that the emporium at York evolved from nearby rural settlements, such as the one at Heslington Hill that was occupied from mid-sixth century into the seventh century and was abandoned just as the new emporium was beginning to coalesce.²³ The emporium at York appears to have been of a relative size to Ipswich or Southampton, approximately twenty-five to sixty-five hectares, with perhaps 1,000 to 2000 inhabitants.²⁴

International trade alone cannot account for rapid growth of these four emporia. As Christopher Loveluck and Dries Tys have noted, there were a large number of smaller coastal and riverside settlements in eastern and southern

¹⁹ Cowie, Kemp, Morton and Wade, "Gazetteer of Known English Wics," 20-4.

²⁰ Nick Stoodley, "The Origins of Hamwic and Its Central Role in the Seventh Century as Revealed by Recent Archaeological Discoveries," in B. Hårdh and L. Larsson (eds.), *Central Places in the Migration and Merovingian Periods: Papers from the 52nd Sachsensymposium, Lund, August 2001* (2002), 317-32, at 318-30.

²¹ Andrews, *Excavations at Hamwic: Volume 2 Excavations at Six Dials*, 252.

²² Tweddle, Moulden and Logan, *Anglian York*, 193, 209.

²³ Cecily Spall, Nicola Toop, Diana Briscoe, Alan Hall, Ailsa Mainman, Stephen Rowland and Alan Vince, "Before Eoforwic: New Light on York in the 6th-7th Centuries," *Medieval Archaeology*, 52 (2008), 1-25, at 11-3, 8-20.

²⁴ Tweddle, Moulden and Logan, *Anglian York*, 93, Cowie, Kemp, Morton and Wade, "Gazetteer of Known English Wics," 92-4.

England that were connected to a network of cross-Channel communications and trade, whose people had access to imported goods, and none of these settlements underwent quite such a dramatic expansion as our four emporia.²⁵ In a landscape dotted with a large number of landing and trading sites, why, then, did the Ipswich, London, Southampton, and York rise to such prominence? The answer is that these emporia were different from other trading sites because they were not just places where raw goods or finished objects were traded, but they were also places where finished objects were created in the workshops of their inhabitants; where rural produce could be exchanged for not only those locally-made objects but also for imported goods or, perhaps, for newly minted coins. The emporia at Ipswich, London, Southampton, and York had a gravity that pulled all of the groups participating in the new commercial economy to one place. They were negotiated spaces where the interests of local elites, resident craftsmen, foreign and local traders, rural elites and their agricultural tenants all converged under the watchful eye of royal officials eager to collect the taxes and tolls due to their kings. It was the convergence of all these interests at an agreed upon location that fostered the dramatic growth of the four major emporia.

Ipswich, London, Southampton, and York with their large populations of craft-workers and traders were connected to rural settlements by a tangle of complex economic relationships that not only influenced their own

²⁵ Chris Loveluck and Dries Tys, "Coastal Societies, Exchange and Identity Along the Channel and Southern North Sea Shores of Europe AD 600-1000," *Journal of Maritime Archaeology*, 1 (2006), 140-69, at 148-53.

development, but also transformed their rural counterparts. The most basic of these relationships was the provisioning of the emporia with grain and meat. The environmental evidence overwhelmingly indicates that the emporia were not self-supporting and that they relied on their hinterlands for much of their food and the raw materials they used in craft production.²⁶ The semi-clean nature of some of the charred cereal remains recovered from the excavations at *Lundenwic* for example, indicates that emporia were relying on grain that was being grown and processed elsewhere.²⁷ The distribution of animal bones and the predominance of “butcher’s waste” on some *Lundenwic* sites indicate that the cattle and sheep providing meat to its inhabitants were raised in the hinterland and driven to the emporia on the hoof and then butchered on site.²⁸ The clustering of butchering within specific zones, moreover, is suggestive of

²⁶ See Jennifer Bourdillon, “The Animal Provisioning of Saxon Southampton,” in D. J. Rackham (ed.), *Environment and Economy in Anglo-Saxon England: A Review of Recent Work on the Environmental Archaeology of Rural and Urban Anglo-Saxon Settlements in England : Proceedings of a Conference Held at the Museum of London, 9-10 April 1990* (1994), 120-5, at 120-5, D. James Rackham, “Economy and Environment in Saxon London,” in D. J. Rackham (ed.), *Environment and Economy in Anglo-Saxon England: A Review of Recent Work on the Environmental Archaeology of Rural and Urban Anglo-Saxon Settlements in England : Proceedings of a Conference Held at the Museum of London, 9-10 April 1990* (1994), 126-35, at 126-35, Alan Vince, “Saxon Urban Economies: An Archaeological Perspective,” in D. J. Rackham (ed.), *Environment and Economy in Anglo-Saxon England: A Review of Recent Work on the Environmental Archaeology of Rural and Urban Anglo-Saxon Settlements in England : Proceedings of a Conference Held at the Museum of London, 9-10 April 1990* (1994), 108-9, at 108-9, Terry O'Connor, “On the Interpretation of the Animal Bone Assemblages from Wics,” in D. Hill and R. Cowie (eds.), *Wics: The Early Mediaeval Trading Centres of Northern Europe*, Sheffield Archaeological Monographs (2001), 54-60, at 54-60, James Rackham, “The Environmental Evidence from Lundenwic,” in J. Leary (ed.), *Tatberht’s Lundenwic: Archaeological Excavations in Middle Saxon London*, Pre-Construct Archaeology Monograph Series, 2 (2004), 148-50, at 148-50.

²⁷ Leary and Brown, *Tatberht’s Lundenwic: Archaeological Excavations in Middle Saxon London*, 38.

²⁸ Malcolm, Bowsher and Cowie, *Middle Saxon London*, 161-2, Katharina Ulmschneider, *Markets, Minsters, and Metal-Detectors: The Archaeology of Middle Saxon Lincolnshire and Hampshire Compared* (Oxford, 2000), 52.

the existence of an active meat market.²⁹ Overall, the recovery of animal bones across the excavated *Lundenwic* sites reveals a general preference for the meat of cattle, but with pigs and sheep also being heavily represented.³⁰ The evidence from Southampton, Ipswich, and York also displays a similar pattern of consumption of cattle, pigs, and sheep.³¹ Unlike the self-delivering beef and mutton, some of the pork that the inhabitants of the emporia consumed arrived from their hinterlands already butchered and some may have literally come from under foot, since there is evidence to suggest that pigs may have been raised within the emporia in the back-yards of the inhabitants.³²

As the populations of the emporia grew, the demand for rural produce must have grown as well—and this must have intensified economic and social connections between the emporia and their rural suppliers. In the eighth century, when Ipswich, London, Southampton, and York were reaching their peaks in terms of population and settlement area, complex changes in rural settlement patterns were spreading across England. Beginning in the late-seventh century, many rural settlements, particularly those in central and north-eastern England, began to migrate from areas of light, fast-draining, chalk and gravel soils to areas of heavier, more productive, clay soils—a trend sometimes known as the “middle-Saxon shift.”³³ Accompanying this change in settlement location was a gradual transition from scattered, small-scale

²⁹ Malcolm, Bowsher and Cowie, *Middle Saxon London*, 30, 103, 61-62.

³⁰ Malcolm, Bowsher and Cowie, *Middle Saxon London*, 160-2, Rackham, "The Enviromental Evidence from Lundenwic," 149-50.

³¹ O'Connor, "Animal Bone Assemblages from Wics," 56-8.

³² Malcolm, Bowsher and Cowie, *Middle Saxon London*, 161.

³³ Christopher J. Arnold and P. Wardle, "Early Medieval Settlement Patterns in England," *Medieval Archaeology: Journal of the Society for Medieval Archaeology*, 25 (1981), at 25.

hamlets to larger, better-organized, nucleated villages and the implementation of new, communally-worked, open field-systems— transformations that were only beginning in this period and continued to spread and develop for centuries.³⁴

Yarnton, Oxfordshire, and Bishopstone, Sussex, are excellent examples of the changes in rural settlement structure and agricultural practice underway in the eighth and ninth centuries. The early Saxon settlements in the Yarnton area of the Upper Thames Valley were small and, according to its excavators, comprised of “haphazardly-arranged sunken-featured buildings sprawling across the gravel terrace.”³⁵ In contrast, the late-eighth-century settlement at Yarnton was a single large, well organized settlement comprised of both substantial, post-built, timber halls and sunken featured buildings separated into different zones.³⁶ Space within the settlement was further organized by a number of enclosures and fences that partitioned off the living space and provided a paddock area and pens for livestock.³⁷ Excavations at Bishopstone, Sussex have identified a similar pattern of settlement shift, consolidation, and reorganization from the nearby upland site of Rookery Hill to the valley-bottom site of middle-Saxon Bishopstone.³⁸

³⁴ Helena Hamerow, *Early Medieval Settlements the Archaeology of Rural Communities in Northwest Europe 400-900* (Oxford, 2004), 124.

³⁵ Gill Hey, Leigh Allen and Alistair Barclay, *Yarnton: Saxon and Medieval Settlement and Landscape; Results of Excavations, 1990-96* (Oxford, 2004), 85.

³⁶ Hey, Allen and Barclay, *Yarnton*, 43-6, 87-8.

³⁷ Hey, Allen and Barclay, *Yarnton*, 43.

³⁸ Gabor Thomas and Marion Archibald, *The Later Anglo-Saxon Settlement at Bishopstone: A Downland Manor in the Making* (York England, 2010), 213.

The advent of these new, more organized settlements coincided with improvements in the agricultural practices of their populations. Palynological analysis of local palaeochannel sediment samples indicates that by the eighth century the inhabitants of Yarnton were farming their fields more systematically and more intensively than their predecessors, producing a greater variety and a greater volume of cereal crops.³⁹ As with Yarnton, at Bishopstone a shift in location was accompanied by a trend toward nucleation, and the slopes around Bishopstone were also farmed more intensively after the establishment of the later, valley-bottom settlement.⁴⁰ The pollen evidence from Yarnton also indicates an improved efficiency in the management of the surrounding grassland, including the grazing of animals on the Yarnton floodplain and the cultivation of hay meadows, which suggest an expansion of livestock husbandry.⁴¹

Helena Hamerow has suggested that the “middle-Saxon shift” and the transition from lighter to heavier soils was “a response to the need to intensify production in order meet the demands of new secular and ecclesiastical landlords for surplus, and to provision the populations of the newly established emporia.”⁴² Furthermore, in her analysis of the faunal assemblages from excavations in Suffolk, Pam Crabtree has identified marked differences in the harvest profiles of “self-sufficient,” early Saxon West Stow and the

³⁹ Hey, Allen and Barclay, *Yarnton*, 48-9.

⁴⁰ Thomas and Archibald, *Bishopstone*, 15.

⁴¹ Hey, Allen and Barclay, *Yarnton*, 47.

⁴² Hamerow, *Early Medieval Settlements the Archaeology of Rural Communities in Northwest Europe 400-900*, 123.

“specialized production” sites of middle Saxon Brandon (sheep/wool) and Wicken Bonhunt (pigs/pork) and the “consumer” site of Middle Saxon Ipswich stating:

It seems reasonable to suggest that the changes in animal husbandry that took place in East Anglia between the Early and Middle Saxon periods can be directly related to the development of increasing political, economic and social complexity that began in the seventh century. Specifically, the growth of the emporia fostered a degree of regional economic integration that was not seen in the pre-urban Early Saxon period.⁴³

This hypothesis fits well with the archaeological and environmental evidence from Yarnton and Bishopstone as well as that from other sites such as Pennyland, Buckinghamshire, which indicates that the people in these settlements were modifying their agricultural practice with a mind to producing a surplus.⁴⁴

This new complexity was interconnected with changes in the larger patterns of landholding and lordship which began during this period. Indeed, Della Hooke has argued that this “middle-Saxon shift” was “closely related to the estate fragmentation that was taking place in the Anglo-Saxon period,”⁴⁵ and Rosamond Faith interprets these changes in land use as an aspect of the evolution of lordship “from the ‘extensive lordship’ of the *regio* or the small *scir* to the individualized lordship of the bookland estate, and the concomitant

⁴³ Pam J. Crabtree, “Production and Consumption in an Early Complex Society: Animal Use in Middle Saxon East Anglia,” *World Archaeology*, 28 (1996), 58-75, at 72-3.

⁴⁴ Helena Hamerow, “Agrarian Production and the Emporia of Mid Saxon England, Ca. AD 650-850,” in H. Joachim (ed.), *Post-Roman Towns, Trade and Settlement in Europe and Byzantium* (2007), 219-32, at 225.

⁴⁵ Della Hooke, “Introduction: Later Anglo-Saxon England,” in D. Hooke (ed.), *Anglo-Saxon Settlements* (1988), 1-9, at 7.

transformation of services owed from the warland into rent.”⁴⁶ The increased agricultural output made possible by these new organizational schemes allowed kings, secular and religious elites, and, perhaps, even some in the lower strata to devote a portion of their surplus to acquiring items produced or procured outside their immediate neighborhoods, fostering a growth in trade and craft production—activities that were key to the development of the emporia at Ipswich, London, Southampton, and York.

Strong connections to rural livestock suppliers were important for more than just keeping the inhabitants of the emporia fed: in addition to the meat they provided the byproducts of the slaughter of cattle, pigs, and sheep; hides, bones, and horns, which were the raw materials necessary for many of the crafts carried out in the emporia. Excavations at Ipswich, London, Southampton, and York have produced extensive evidence of antler, bone, and horn working.⁴⁷ We also know from the evidence of tanning pits and leather working tools that tanned hides and finished leather goods were also being made at the emporia.⁴⁸ The antler used by the craftsmen of the emporia, as with the bone and cattle horn, was supplied from the hinterland. Unlike the bone and horn, however, antler was a sustainable product as it did not necessarily require the slaughter of the animal for harvest and the low incidence of deer bones found at London suggests that the antlers worked in

⁴⁶ Rosamond Faith, *The English Peasantry and the Growth of Lordship* (London, 1997), 152.

⁴⁷ Malcolm, Bowsher and Cowie, *Middle Saxon London*, 170-5, Morton, Davies and Andrews, *Excavations at Hamwic*, , 56, Ian Riddler, "Production in Lundenwic: Antler, Bone and Horn Working," in J. Leary (ed.), *Tatberht's Lundenwic: Archaeological Excavations in Middle Saxon London*, Pre-Construct Archaeology Monograph Series, 2 (2004), 145-8, at 145-6.

⁴⁸ Malcolm, Bowsher and Cowie, *Middle Saxon London*, 52-4.

the emporia were gathered seasonally rather than procured as the result of hunting.⁴⁹

Antler, bone, and horn were used to produce a wide range of objects, including handles, sword and knife guards, spindle whorls, pin beaters, pins, broach-molds, and combs.⁵⁰ The varied nature of the objects produced by the antler-, bone- and horn-workers indicates that these craftsmen were pedaling their wares to every strata of society, from fellow craftsmen to sword-carrying, rural elites. Indeed, one of the most common items to be recovered from emporia are horn and bone combs, with large number of them being recovered from Southampton, Ipswich, and London.⁵¹ These combs were everyday objects, the use of which was certainly not restricted to elites. Just as today, they must have been regular part of almost everyone's personal kit. Some of these combs and other bone, horn, and antler items must have made their way back to rural communities that supplied the raw materials for their manufacture.

The recovery of loom weights, spindle whorls, and needles at Ipswich, London, Southampton, and York indicates that wool cloth was being produced at these sites.⁵² One or perhaps all of the emporia, but most likely Mercian London, was the probable source of the cloaks mentioned in the famous letter from Charlemagne to Offa regarding trade between the Carolingian Empire and

⁴⁹ Malcolm, Bowsher and Cowie, *Middle Saxon London*, 171.

⁵⁰ Riddler, "Production in Lundenwic: Antler, Bone and Horn Working," 145.

⁵¹ Riddler, "Production in Lundenwic: Antler, Bone and Horn Working," 146.

⁵² Cowie, Kemp, Morton and Wade, "Gazetteer of Known English Wics," 86-7, Malcolm, Bowsher and Cowie, *Middle Saxon London*, 168-70, Morton, Davies and Andrews, *Excavations at Hamwic*, 56-7.

England.⁵³ The frequency of recovery and the widespread distribution of loom weights at London suggest that weaving was a common activity at the emporia.⁵⁴ The wool used for cloth production in the emporia must have come from their surrounding hinterlands, and there is evidence that during the seventh and eighth centuries some rural settlements were altering their husbandry practices to focus on intensive wool production. Excavations at Quarrington, Lincolnshire, have revealed evidence of a change in the organization of the settlement and a corresponding change in its husbandry practices prior to its abandonment in the second half of the eighth century.⁵⁵ The animal bone assemblage from Quarrington shows an increase in the importance of sheep, indicating that wool was becoming a valuable commodity and that those in charge of the settlement had made a conscious decision to focus on its production.⁵⁶ The settlement at Brandon, Suffolk, occupied from approximately 650 to 900, also appears to have turned toward specializing in wool production during this period. Examination of the faunal assemblage for middle-Saxon Brandon reveals a high proportion of mature sheep and a higher proportion of male animals, possibly wethers, which is indicative of a wool producing flock.⁵⁷ The elites controlling Quarrington and Brandon must have found a ready market for their wool at Ipswich, London, or York where it was

⁵³ Dorothy Whitelock, *English Historical Documents, C. 500-1042* (New York, 1955), 781.

⁵⁴ Malcolm, Bowsher and Cowie, *Middle Saxon London*, 168-70.

⁵⁵ Gary Taylor, "An Early to Middle Saxon Settlement at Quarrington, Lincolnshire," *Antiquaries' Journal*, 83 (2003), 231-80, at 273-6.

⁵⁶ Taylor, "An Early to Middle Saxon Settlement at Quarrington, Lincolnshire," at 270-3.

⁵⁷ Pam J. Crabtree, "The Wool Trade and the Rise of Urbanism in Middle Saxon England," in B. Wailes (ed.), *Craft Specialization and Social Evolution: In Memory of V. Gordon Childe*, University Museum Monograph; 93 (1996), 99-106, at 100-4.

spun and woven into cloth, or, perhaps, simply shipped across the Channel in bulk.⁵⁸

There is also ample evidence for iron and non-ferrous metalworking at the emporia. Hearths, iron working tools, and slag have been recovered at Ipswich, London, Southampton, and York.⁵⁹ The iron, copper, and tin worked in these towns must also have been supplied to the emporia from places in their hinterlands. At London, it appears that the iron being worked was smelted elsewhere, possibly the Weald, and brought to the settlement as blooms or bars.⁶⁰ As with the livestock and foodstuffs, there must have been some type of reciprocal economic arrangement between the suppliers of the iron or their lords and the metalworkers of the emporia. The iron artifacts recovered from the emporia also display production for a wide variety of clientele; tools, knives, fittings, keys, locks, and cauldrons, and although we cannot be certain that all of the finds recovered from the workshops of other craftsmen or from domestic contexts were produced locally, some must have been.⁶¹ Evidence for non-ferrous metalworking has also been recovered at the major emporia in the form of crucibles, vessels, and moulds, as well as wire,

⁵⁸ Crabtree, "The Wool Trade and the Rise of Urbanism in Middle Saxon England," 103-4.

⁵⁹ Keith Wade, "Ipswich," in R. Hodges and B. Hobley (eds.), *The Rebirth of Towns in the West, A.D. 700-1050*, Council for British Archaeology Research Report (1988), 93-100, at 95, Lyn Blackmore, "The Iron Objects," in G. Malcolm, D. Bowsher and R. Cowie (eds.), *Middle Saxon London: Excavations at the Royal Opera House, 1989-99*, Molas Monograph Series, 15 (2003), 251-64, at 252-4, Morton, Davies and Andrews, *Excavations at Hamwic*, 56, Cowie, Kemp, Morton and Wade, "Gazetteer of Known English Wics," 93.

⁶⁰ Malcolm, Bowsher and Cowie, *Middle Saxon London*, 175-6.

⁶¹ Blackmore, "The Iron Objects," 251.

blanks, and scraps of copper, silver, and gold.⁶² Although much of what they produced must have been high-end, particularly the brooches and jewelry, the gold-, silver and copper-smiths of the emporia must have also spent some of their time producing more mundane products such as the copper-alloy pins that are common finds on both urban and rural sites.⁶³

Pottery is another category of object that was produced, traded, and consumed by the inhabitants of the major *emporia*. With regard to the production and trade of pottery, Ipswich was unique in that it was the only major emporium known to have manufactured pottery on an industrial scale.⁶⁴ The inland distribution pattern for Ipswich-ware indicates that Ipswich traded heavily with its hinterland, including sites that have been associated with large-scale animal husbandry such as Wicken Bonhunt and Terrington St. Clement, as well as other high-status settlements from London to York.⁶⁵ Ipswich-ware pots must have arrived in the rural communities in East Anglia in exchange for the food that kept the inhabitants of Ipswich fed or the wool and other raw materials that fueled their international trade.⁶⁶

Around the mid-eighth century, Ipswich ware became the dominate pottery in London, accounting for between 18% and 20% of all the pottery

⁶² Lyn Blackmore and Megan Dennis, "Non-Ferrous Metalworking," in G. Malcolm, D. Bowsher and R. Cowie (eds.), *Middle Saxon London: Excavations at the Royal Opera House, 1989-99*, Molas Monograph Series, 15 (2003), 271-5, at 271-2.

⁶³ Robert Cowie and Lyn Blackmore, *Early and Middle Saxon Rural Settlement in the London Region* (London, 2008), 145.

⁶⁴ Wade, "Ipswich," 95.

⁶⁵ Paul Blinkhorn, "Of Cabbages and Kings: Production, Trade, and Consumption in Middle-Saxon England," in M. Anderton (ed.), *Anglo-Saxon Trading Centres: Beyond the Emporia* (1999), 2-23, at 2-23.

⁶⁶ Blinkhorn, "Of Cabbages and Kings: Production, Trade, and Consumption in Middle-Saxon England," 10-6.

recovered there.⁶⁷ The volume of Ipswich-ware recovered in London clearly indicates strong trade connections between the two emporia, and London may have been the source of the Ipswich-ware that began to arrive at Yarnton in the eighth century.⁶⁸ At the height of its production, there must have been hundreds of people toiling away at wheels and kilns producing Ipswich ware to meet the demands of their trading partners.

Ipswich-ware may be a product of Ipswich's early ties to the Continent. Paul Blinkhorn has suggested that advent of Ipswich ware in the late seventh century may have had its origins in the presence of a colony of Frisian traders at Ipswich.⁶⁹ Ipswich-ware, which was produced on a turn-table and fired in a kiln, represented a departure from the earlier handmade pottery produced at Ipswich and across southern England and was very similar to Frisian pottery in fabric, form, and color.⁷⁰ Blinkhorn has also theorized that it was presence of these Frisians that helped the Anglo-Saxon population of Ipswich overcome their cultural bias towards traditional, hand-formed pottery and accept the new foreign-inspired Ipswich ware.⁷¹

The pottery recovered from the emporium at Southampton, *Hamwic*, also suggests it had complex ties to both its rural hinterland and to the Continent. By examining how *Hamwic*'s inhabitants produced, acquired, used,

⁶⁷ Lyn Blackmore and Dennis Megan, "The Pottery," in G. Malcolm, D. Bowsher and R. Cowie (eds.), *Middle Saxon London: Excavations at the Royal Opera House, 1989-99*, Molas Monograph Series, 15 (2003), 225-41, at 234-5.

⁶⁸ Hey, Allen and Barclay, *Yarnton*, 80-1, 268.

⁶⁹ Paul Blinkhorn, "Stranger in a Strange Land: Middle Saxon Ipswich Ware", presented at *Pottery in the Making* (British Museum, 1997), 4-6.

⁷⁰ Blinkhorn, "Stranger in a Strange Land: Middle Saxon Ipswich Ware", 1-3.

⁷¹ Blinkhorn, "Stranger in a Strange Land: Middle Saxon Ipswich Ware", 5-6.

and disposed of pottery, Ben Jervis has been able to identify groups or networks within the larger population who “engaged” with their pottery in specific ways based on their links to other regions. The fabric, form, and method of production of a group’s pots and the ways in which they interacted with them are indicative of the group’s local, regional, and international connections and how those connections changed over time.

The pottery recovered from the first two phases of *Hamwic’s* development tells the story of an urbanizing settlement whose population was influenced by both regional and cross-Channel trade connections. Jervis’ examination of the locally-produced pottery from the earliest phase of *Hamwic’s* growth, predominately organic-tempered wares, reveals that it was produced on a “domestic scale” and exchanged within a given “neighborhood” or group, which is consistent with what we know about *Hamwic’s* poly-focal origin.⁷² The small quantities of early, non-local, English pottery recovered at *Hamwic* indicate that some of these groups had recently come from *Hamwic’s* rural hinterland or had maintained connections with communities there.⁷³ The early pottery from the site also indicates that the most of the bulk food processing at *Hamwic* took place on the semi-rural periphery of the settlement and that people who lived on the outskirts of *Hamwic* were more involved in

⁷² Ben Jervis, “A Patchwork of People, Pots and Places: Material Engagements and the Construction of ‘the Social’ in Hamwic (Anglo-Saxon Southampton), UK,” *Journal of Social Archaeology*, 11 (2011), 239-65, at 245-8.

⁷³ Jervis, “A Patchwork of People, Pots and Places,” at 245-7.

the processing of agricultural produce than their neighbors in heart of the settlement.⁷⁴

The assemblage of domestically produced pottery recovered from the period of *Hamwic*'s expansion, Jervis' phase 2, is dominated by two new types of pottery, Sandy wares and Chalk-tempered wares. The Sandy wares were produced "relatively locally" and were most likely based on prototypes from France or eastern England and were distributed more widely within *Hamwic*, which may indicate a "settlement-wide market for pottery."⁷⁵ The Chalk-tempered wares from *Hamwic* were probably produced near Winchester and most likely entered the emporium as containers, indicating that they were exchanged as part of the trade that provisioned the emporium.⁷⁶ The wider distribution of the Sandy and Chalk-tempered wares indicates that the craftsmen of Anglo-Saxon Southampton were consumers as well as producers of trade-goods, and that they were becoming more culturally homogeneous through their engagement with these vessels.

Quantities of foreign pottery, mostly from northern France, have also been recovered from *Hamwic* and these pots are indicative of the settlement's Continental trade connections. The groups using this imported pottery may have been foreigners themselves, merchants or the crews from their ships, or locals who had close ties with the Continent which influenced their choice of

⁷⁴ Jervis, "A Patchwork of People, Pots and Places," at 247-8.

⁷⁵ Jervis, "A Patchwork of People, Pots and Places," at 248.

⁷⁶ Jervis, "A Patchwork of People, Pots and Places," at 248.

pots.⁷⁷ The influence of these foreign-pot-users on the local population can be seen in the how food was prepared using ceramic cooking vessels. Groups using foreign pottery, or local pottery that was influenced in type and form by foreign prototypes, were much more likely to prepare their food by suspending the pot over the fire, as opposed to the more common regional practice of placing the pot directly in the fire.⁷⁸ The groups using foreign or foreign-inspired pots were, through their cooking practices, further differentiating themselves from their rural counterparts who had no access to foreign pots or cooking practices.

The decline of *Hamwic* and its international trade connections is also revealed in its pottery. The final ceramic phase at Hamwic saw the introduction of a new type of pottery, Gritty wares, that “were once again produced and exchanged at a neighborhood level,” signaling that the settlement-wide market for pottery had withered.⁷⁹ This period also saw a widespread return to the regional practice of placing cooking vessels directly in the fire.⁸⁰ Those groups that had been cooking in a foreign manner may have left the settlement or may have changed their practice in response to the new type of wares or, perhaps, to a change in the available foodstuffs.⁸¹

All of the material evidence recovered thus far indicates that a large percentage of the populations of the emporia at Ipswich, London,

⁷⁷ Jervis, “A Patchwork of People, Pots and Places,” at 256.

⁷⁸ Jervis, “A Patchwork of People, Pots and Places,” at 256.

⁷⁹ Jervis, “A Patchwork of People, Pots and Places,” at 249-52.

⁸⁰ Jervis, “A Patchwork of People, Pots and Places,” at 249-52.

⁸¹ Jervis, “A Patchwork of People, Pots and Places,” at 249-52.

Southampton, and York must have engaged in craft production on a full-time basis, perhaps most even practicing more than one craft, depending on the season.⁸² And the goods that these craftsmen produced ranged from the common-place to the high-end, from bone pins to gold jewelry. Consequently, the craft production at the major emporia appears to have been too diverse, both in the range of goods produced and their intrinsic value, to be representative of a simple tribute or command economy. The craft production at Ipswich, London, Southampton, and York, as with their provisioning, appears to have been much more aligned with some sort of controlled market economy. Moreover, this economy must have been organized in a manner that was mutually beneficial to the inhabitants of the emporia and the rural elites who controlled the estates that supplied their food and raw materials.

The Ipswich, London, Southampton, and York were not just super-sized villages of craftsmen; they also served as centers of trade and distribution for the goods their populations produced, as well as the goods that local and foreign traders brought to their beaches and river banks. As with craft production, we again have to consider the nature and volume of the goods being traded and who was participating in this trade. There is certainly ample archaeological evidence for high-end, foreign luxuries including glassware, pottery, and metalwork being traded at the emporia.⁸³ In the textual sources, we also occasionally find mention of other imported trade goods that leave

⁸² Malcolm, Bowsher and Cowie, *Middle Saxon London*, 174-5.

⁸³ Phil Andrews, "The Six Dials Evidence in a Wider Context," in P. Andrews (ed.), *Excavations at Hamwic: Volume 2*, Council for British Archaeology Research Report, 109 (1997), 252-5, at 252-3.

little or no trace in the archaeological record. In his letter to Cuthwin regarding the death of Bede, Cuthbert the deacon recalls how Bede told him that he had a few “precious things” in his chest that he wished to share out to priests of his monastery before he died.⁸⁴ These “precious things” were pepper, textile stoles, and some incense. At least two of Bede’s “precious things” must have been imported—the pepper and the incense—and we should consider that the stoles might have been silk and would, therefore, have been imported as well.⁸⁵

One of the most common imports excavated from Anglo-Saxon sites, however, is one that was clearly aimed at less elevated consumers, Mayen lava quernstones from the Rhineland. These quernstones were utilitarian, domestic objects; perhaps a luxury to some, but not in the same class as finely made glass or well-wrought silver. Fragments of these stones have been found at London, Southampton, and York.⁸⁶ Lava quernstone fragments have also been recovered from the excavations of numerous middle-Saxon rural sites throughout England including Yarnton, Market Lavington, and Quarrington.⁸⁷ The apparent ubiquity of these imported quernstones alongside Ipswich-ware vessels at rural sites provides compelling evidence that the relationship

⁸⁴ Cuthbert's Letter to Bede in Bede, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, ed. B. Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors (Oxford, 1969), 584.

⁸⁵ Penelope Walton Rogers, *Cloth and Clothing in Early Anglo-Saxon England, AD 450-700* (York, 2007), 240, 7-8.

⁸⁶ Richenda Goffin, "The Quernstones," in G. Malcolm, D. Bowsher and R. Cowie (eds.), *Middle Saxon London: Excavations at the Royal Opera House, 1989-99*, Molas Monograph Series, 15 (2003), 204-9, at 204-5.

⁸⁷ Hey, Allen and Barclay, *Yarnton*, 80, 292, Tania M. Dickinson, "An Early Anglo-Saxon Cemetery at Quarrington, near Sleaford, Lincolnshire: Report on Excavations, 2000-2001," *Lincolnshire History and Archaeology*, 39 (2005), at 255-6, Phillip Williams and Richard Newman, *Market Lavington, Wiltshire, an Anglo-Saxon Cemetery and Settlement: Excavations at Grove Farm, 1986-90* (Salisbury UK, 2006), 131.

between the emporia and their hinterlands was a two-way street. One of the most interesting things about the London quernstone fragments is that some of the stones appear to have been only partially finished, indicating that they may have been shipped from the Rhineland in a rough state and then finished by craftsmen at the emporia.⁸⁸ This hints at complex trade connections, not only between the emporia and regional agricultural settlements, but between artisans in England and the suppliers of raw stone from the Continent.⁸⁹ The continental evidence for the distribution of Mayen lava quernstones strongly suggest that the trade in these stones was controlled by Frisian traders and that Dorestad was a key node in the distribution network.⁹⁰ The presence of Frisian traders and the commodities they provided at London was, at least in this case, clearly influencing what was being produced at the emporia.

Although Bede's bequests were imported luxuries, their value did not compare to treasures of the greatest elites, either secular or religious. His most treasured possessions were a far cry from the lavish displays deposited at Sutton Hoo or Prittlewell a century or so before his death.⁹¹ Bede's "precious things" represented a level of wealth commensurate with his station. A comparison of Bede's treasures with the personal possessions of other seventh- and eighth-century elites reveals varying levels of wealth and varying levels of

⁸⁸ Goffin, "The Quernstones," 205.

⁸⁹ Jonathan Parkhouse, "The Distribution and Exchange of Mayen Lava Quernstones in Early Medieval Northwestern Europe," *Exchange and Trade in Medieval Europe: Papers of the Medieval Europe Brugge 1997 Conference* (1997), 97-106, at 99-102, 3-5.

⁹⁰ Parkhouse, "The Distribution and Exchange of Mayen Lava Quernstones," 104.

⁹¹ M. O. H. Carver and Angela Care Evans, *Sutton Hoo: A Seventh-Century Princely Burial Ground and Its Context* (London, 2005), , Museum of London Archaeology Service, *The Prittlewell Prince: The Discovery of a Rich Anglo-Saxon Burial in Essex* (London, 2004), 23-42.

ability to acquire imported or finished goods.⁹² Cuthbert's story of Bede's gifts, like Bede's own description of eighth-century London as "an emporium for many nations who come to it by land and sea,"⁹³ hints at a widespread demand for foreign commodities in middle-Saxon England that was not restricted to kings, thegns, bishops, or abbots but included monks and others of even lesser station whose lives might be improved by an imported basalt quernstone.

The extant numismatic evidence also indicates that the emporia at Ipswich, London, Southampton, and York were integrated into both regional and international trade networks that operated, at least partially, on a market basis.⁹⁴ There have been a relatively large number of both Anglo-Saxon and Continental *sceatas* recovered at the major emporia, particularly at Southampton, with over 150 finds recorded. There is also ample evidence that these coins were being minted at London, Southampton, and York; and there is speculation that there may have also been a mint in Ipswich.⁹⁵ The model of regional trade networks is supported by the fact that the emporia do not appear to have been the only sites involved in monetized trade during this period.⁹⁶ There is growing evidence that other inland, rural sites of exchange

⁹² David Hinton, *Gold and Gilt, Pots and Pins: Possessions and People in Medieval Britain* (Oxford ; New York, 2005), 39-74.

⁹³ Bede, *HE*, ii, 3.

⁹⁴ Michael Metcalf, "Variations in the Composition of Currency at Different Places in England," in T. Pestell and K. Ulmschneider (eds.), *Markets in Early Medieval Europe: Trading and Productive Sites, 650-850* (2003), 37-47, at 47.

⁹⁵ Andrews, "The Six Dials Evidence," 253-6, Malcolm, Bowsher and Cowie, *Middle Saxon London*, 149.

⁹⁶ John Naylor, "Access to International Trade in Middle-Saxon England: A Case of Urban over-Emphasis?," in M. Pasquinucci and T. Weski (eds.), *Close Encounters: Sea- and Riverborne*

existed. This evidence is based on the volume of coin finds being brought to light by metal detectorists.⁹⁷ This has led to the creation of a new category of find site known as a “productive site.” These “productive sites” have produced large numbers of coins and/or metalwork finds within a confined geographic area.⁹⁸ The growing consensus is that these “productive sites” were the locations of inland markets or other commercial centers of consumption and/or distribution.⁹⁹ The evidence from this type of site indicates that in the eighth-century coin radiated outward from the emporia in a pattern that supports the hypothesis that the emporia acted as central places for the consumption and redistribution of raw materials from the hinterland in exchange for coin and for both local and imported trade goods.¹⁰⁰

The *raison d'être* of the major emporia and the complex regional and international trade networks that they served can be explained in a single word—wealth. The driving force behind the rise of the emporia and the changes in rural settlement structure and agricultural practice which provided the food and raw materials that fuelled their growth was the desire of secular and ecclesiastic elites to accumulate and display wealth. John Moreland has argued that it was seventh- and eighth-century elites who were the “hidden

Trade, Ports and Hinterlands, Ship Construction and Navigation in Antiquity, the Middle Ages and in Modern Time, BAR International Series, 1283 (2004), 139-46, at 140-6.

⁹⁷ M. A. S. Blackburn, "'Productive Sites' and the Pattern of Coin Loss in England 600-1180," in T. Pestell and K. Ulmschneider (eds.), *Markets in Early Medieval Europe: Trading and Productive Sites, 650-850* (2003), 20-36, at 24-35.

⁹⁸ Pestell and Ulmschneider, "Introduction," 1-2.

⁹⁹ Pestell and Ulmschneider, "Introduction," 1-10.

¹⁰⁰ Michael Metcalf, "Productive' Sites and the Pattern of Coin Loss in England, 600-1180," in T. Pestell and K. Ulmschneider (eds.), *Markets in Early Medieval Europe: Trading and Productive Sites, 650-850* (2003), 28-36, at 28-35.

hand” directing the changes taking place in the countryside and in the new towns of Anglo-Saxon England, all in an effort to convert the surplus produce of their estates into the coins, manufactured finery and imported exotica they so strongly desired.¹⁰¹

This is not to say that the kings of Anglo-Saxon England were not also key players in the blossoming of this new complex economy and the growth of the major emporia. At the height of their development in the seventh and eighth centuries, we know that kings were definitely regulating and profiting from the trade at these towns, just as they did from agricultural production at most other settlements. The so-called “Kentish laws” of Hlothere and Eadric state that if any man of Kent purchases property in *Lundenwic* he should have two or three trustworthy men as witness or the king’s wicreeve.¹⁰²

The small *corpus* of eighth-century toll remissions from Mercia and Kent, which survive in later copies, evidence one of the direct interests that early English kings and their agents had in the emporia, the taxing of trading ships and their cargoes.¹⁰³ The ten documents that make up this *corpus*, each detailing the remission of one or more ships belonging to a bishopric or minster from royal tolls, reveal something of how the emporia served not only as ports and markets but also as toll-stations for kings to extract their due from those trading within their realm. They also demonstrate that regional elites, particularly ecclesiastic elites, were more than just consumers of the products

¹⁰¹ Moreland, “The Significance of Production in Eighth-Century England,” 101-4.

¹⁰² Hlothere and Eadric in *Die Gesetze Der Angelsachsen*, ed. F. Liebermann (Aalen, 1960),

¹⁰³ Susan Kelly, “Trading Privileges from Eighth-Century England,” *Early Medieval Europe*, 1 (1992), 3-28, at 16-22.

traded at the emporia, but that they were also active suppliers and sellers of trade-goods as well.

Eight of the extant toll-charters deal explicitly or implicitly with the remission of tolls at London,¹⁰⁴ and of the eight, half were issued to the monastic community at Minster-in-Thamet.¹⁰⁵ In one of the earliest of these grants, erroneously attributed to 716/717 in the existing copies but most likely issued in the 730's, King Æthelbald of Mercia grants to the community at Minster-in-Thamet the remission of the toll on one ship due at the port of London.¹⁰⁶ Another grant issued by Æthelbald in 737/738 to the community at Minster-in-Thamet extends the remission of the toll on one ship throughout the Mercian kingdom.¹⁰⁷ A third toll-charter, issued by Æthelbald in 748, grants to Minster-in-Thamet remission of one half of the toll on a ship that they had purchased from one Leubucus.¹⁰⁸ Susan Kelly has suggested that based on his name that this Leubucus was probably a Frank.¹⁰⁹ The last of the London toll-charters issued to Minster-in-Thamet is a confirmation by Offa of Æthelbald's remission of the toll on the one ship throughout the Mercian kingdom, which was issued sometime between 761 and 764.¹¹⁰ These remissions tell us the community at Minster-in-Thamet actively participated in the trade taking place at London and did so to such an extent that it was profitable enough for the

¹⁰⁴ Charters will be cited throughout using the numbering in *Anglo-Saxon Charters: An Annotated List and Bibliography*, ed. P. H. Sawyer, (London, 1968), S86, S88, S87, S91, S98, S103a, S143, & S1788

¹⁰⁵ S86, S87, S91, & S143.

¹⁰⁶ S86.

¹⁰⁷ S87.

¹⁰⁸ S91.

¹⁰⁹ Kelly, "Trading Privileges from Eighth-Century England," at 7.

¹¹⁰ S143.

community to purchase its own ships. Minster-in-Thanel must also have had sufficient contacts on the Continent to arrange the purchase of a ship from a Frankish seller.

The abbesses of Minster-in-Thanel can be seen as representative of the many eighth-century elites who must have participated in the commerce taking place at London and the other emporia, and whose patronage must have contributed to their growth. Of the other four London remissions, all issued by Æthelbald, two were made to Bishop Ingwald of London, one to the Bishop Mildred and the community at Worcester, and the last was given to the Bishop Ealdwulf and the community at Rochester.¹¹¹ Each of the two remissions issued to Bishop Ingwald of London, sometime between 716 and 745, were for the remission of the toll on one ship, presumably at London.¹¹² Interestingly, the second of these two toll-charters notes that the king had previously exempted other ships belonging to the bishop, which indicates that Bishop Ingwald, like the community at Minster-in-Thanel, must have had more than two ships engaged in trade at that time.¹¹³ The Rochester remission for the toll on one ship at London was issued by Æthelbald in 733 and was confirmed by King Berhtwulf sometime between 844 and 852.¹¹⁴ The remission given to the Bishop Mildred and the community at Worcester for the toll of two ships at

¹¹¹ S103a, S1788, S88, & S98.

¹¹² S103a & S1788.

¹¹³ S1788.

¹¹⁴ S88.

London survives in a ninth- or tenth-century English translation of a Latin original.¹¹⁵

The London remissions show us that the kings of Mercia were collecting tolls on ships at London from at least the 730s, and that the practice lasted until at least the 840's, and that the elites engaged in trade were eager to negotiate exemptions for their trading ships.¹¹⁶ London was both the hub of a regional trading network that extended from Worcester in the west to Thanet and Rochester in Kent as well a node in a larger cross-Channel network that extended to Fancia, Frisia, and Scandinavia, all of which made it an opportune place to extract tolls.¹¹⁷ Two other eighth-century remissions tell us that that kings of Kent were collecting tolls at Sarre and Fordwich, profiting from the same regional and cross-Channel commercial activity as the kings of Mercia.¹¹⁸ Sarre and Fordwich were well positioned to act as stopovers and toll-stations for ships navigating the Wantsum Channel on their way up the Thames estuary to London.¹¹⁹ Furthermore, Fordwich has long been postulated as the external emporium serving Canterbury, and it seems logical that the kings of Kent would want to exploit any trade taking place there.¹²⁰

¹¹⁵ S98.

¹¹⁶ S86, S88, S87, S91, S98, S103a, S143, & S1788.

¹¹⁷ Robert Cowie, "Mercian London," in M. Brown and C. A. Farr (eds.), *Mercia: An Anglo-Saxon Kingdom in Europe* (2001), 194-209, at 202-3.

¹¹⁸ S29 & S1612.

¹¹⁹ Kelly, "Trading Privileges from Eighth-Century England," at 10.

¹²⁰ See David Hill, Maggie Bailey, Mark Gardiner, David Griffiths, David Holmand, Kieth Parfitt, David Perkins and Ian Riddler, "Appendix 2. Gazetteer of Possible Anglo-Saxon Wics," in D. Hill and R. Cowie (eds.), *Wics: The Early Mediaeval Trading Centres of Northern Europe*, Sheffield Archaeological Monographs, 14 (2001), 95-103, at 95.

Based on the evidence from London, Sarre, and Fordwich, it seems doubtful that the kings of Wessex, East Anglia, and Northumbria would not have taken tolls at Southampton, Ipswich, and York respectively. Citing the distribution of eighth-century coin finds in Yorkshire, John Naylor has argued that just such a system of markets and tolls may have existed along the main routes from the Northumbrian coast to York.¹²¹ Susan Kelly and Neal Middleton have suggested that the Anglo-Saxon kings exacting tolls on trading ships were most likely influenced by Merovingian and Carolingian toll systems which they would have been familiar with.¹²² This model of a Frankish inspiration for toll-taking is well bolstered by the fact that Anglo-Saxon merchants engaged in cross-Channel trade would certainly have been confronted with the tolls at Frankish ports such as Quentovic and brought that information back to England where wealth-hungry kings would have welcomed a mechanism to profit from the commerce taking place in their kingdoms.¹²³

Salt was one of the commodities subject to royal tolls and taxes across early medieval Europe and it provided a regular source of revenue for some of the early English kings.¹²⁴ Indeed, J.R. Maddicott has argued that the revenue generated by the exploitation and subsequent taxation of salt production at

¹²¹ John Naylor, "The Circulation of Early-Medieval European Coinage: A Case Study from Yorkshire, C. 650-C. 867," *Medieval Archaeology*, 51 (2007), 41-61, at 53, 5, 9-60.

¹²² Kelly, "Trading Privileges from Eighth-Century England," at 17-26, Neal Middleton, "Early Medieval Port Customs, Tolls and Controls on Foreign Trade," *Early Medieval Europe*, 13 (2005), 313-58, at 317-51.

¹²³ Kelly, "Trading Privileges from Eighth-Century England," at 55.

¹²⁴ Michael McCormick, *Origins of the European Economy : Communications and Commerce, A.D. 300-900* (Cambridge, UK ; New York, 2001), 645-6, 98, 779, J.R. Maddicott, "London and Droitwich, C. 650-750: Trade, Industry and the Rise of Mercia," *Anglo-Saxon England*, 34 (2005), 7-58, at 7-8, 24-58.

Droitwich, Worcestershire were a major source of wealth for the kings of Mercia and later Wessex.¹²⁵ Furthermore, Maddicott argues that the simultaneous control of Droitwich and the emporium at London was a key factor in the ascendancy of Mercia in the eighth century.¹²⁶ The annexation of the kingdom of the Hwicce during the second half of the seventh century brought Droitwich and its valuable brine-pits under Mercian control and the kings of Mercia immediately began to exercise their rights to their new resource.¹²⁷ The swiftness with which the Merician kings began to carve up Droitwich and the surrounding area is illustrated by two seventh-century charters, both recorded in a later collection from Worcester; the first is a charter of Wulfhere granting fifty hides at Hanbury, near Droitwich, along with its salt-pits to one Abbot Colman sometime between 657 and 675.¹²⁸ The second is a charter of Æthelred granting Bishop Ofor of Worcester land at Fladbury with rights to a salt-house and two furnaces at Droitwich in 691.¹²⁹ The explicit reference to the salt-works indicates that both parties understood they were of particular importance.

Access to the salt-works at and around Droitwich was a valuable franchise that the kings of Mercia could grant to their supporters—particularly the many new monastic houses in the region—as salt was a necessity that could be consumed or easily traded for other goods or coin.¹³⁰ In 716 or 717,

¹²⁵ Maddicott, "London and Droitwich," at 7-8, 48-57.

¹²⁶ Maddicott, "London and Droitwich," at 7-8, 48-57.

¹²⁷ Maddicott, "London and Droitwich," at 26-9.

¹²⁸ S1822, Maddicott, "London and Droitwich," at 28.

¹²⁹ Maddicott, "London and Droitwich," at 28.

¹³⁰ Maddicott, "London and Droitwich," at 31-2.

Æthelbald granted the church at Worcester land at Droitwich, south of the river Salwarp, on which to build “three sheds and six furnaces” in exchange for “six other furnaces in two sheds” located on the north bank of the river.¹³¹

This exchange of salt-working sites indicates that both the king and the community at Worcester had a direct interest in the production of salt at Droitwich. Some of the salt produced at these salt-works must have been consumed by the king’s household and the brethren at Worcester, but some portion must also have been traded by their tenants or agents at Droitwich.

The king’s fiscal interest in the salt industry extended beyond his share of what was produced. The real money was in the taxes it generated. The forms of the taxation levied on Droitwich salt are revealed by a number of Mercian charters. In the early eighth century, Æthelbald granted the monastery at Evesham a share in a salt-house at Droitwich, “free from the common tax.”¹³² Despite its brevity, as Maddicott states, “at a minimum this shows that Æthelbald was accustomed to tax salt-production at Droitwich.”¹³³ The later evidence is somewhat more detailed in its description of who was involved in collecting the taxes on salt. A late ninth-century charter of Ealdorman Æthelred granted five hides at Himbleton, just to the southeast of Droitwich, to an Æthelwulf including six “salt boilings” that were free of “any tribute to the ruler of the people, or the ealdorman, or the reeve.”¹³⁴ This

¹³¹ S102, Maddicott, “London and Droitwich,” at 28-9.

¹³² S136, Maddicott, “London and Droitwich,” at 39-40.

¹³³ Maddicott, “London and Droitwich,” at 40.

¹³⁴ S219, Maddicott, “London and Droitwich,” at 39.

makes it clear that the king's agents were charged with making sure he received his due.

The tax on salt production at Droitwich was only the first part of a “double levy” on salt.¹³⁵ The second, and another valuable source of royal revenue, were tolls paid on the wagon- or pack-load during its transport. A late ninth-century charter issued by Æthelred and Æthelflaed granted half of their rights within the new *burh* at Worcester to the church there, excepting only the wagon-shilling and load-penny at Droitwich, which were to go “to the king as they always did.”¹³⁶ Evidently, the king was unwilling to forgo what must have been a substantial take from the offloading of Droitwich salt at Worcester for transfer to boats on the River Severn.¹³⁷

Bidford-on-Avon may have been another important toll-station for Droitwich salt. The emergence of Bidford-on-Avon as a so called “productive site” for metal-detecting supports the contention that the site may have acted as a hub for the distribution of salt shipped overland from Droitwich.¹³⁸ Situated at the intersection of the River Avon, Ryknild Street, and the Anglo-Saxon *Sealt Stræt*, Bidford-on-Avon was well positioned to act as a transfer

¹³⁵ Maddicott, “London and Droitwich,” at 43.

¹³⁶ S223, Maddicott, “London and Droitwich,” at 41.

¹³⁷ Maddicott, “London and Droitwich,” at 45-6.

¹³⁸ Maddicott, “London and Droitwich,” at 46, Phillip Wise and Wilfred Seaby, “Finds from a New ‘Productive Site’ At Bidford Warwickshire,” *Birmingham and Warwickshire Archaeological Society Transactions*, 99 (1995), 57-64, at 57-64, John Naylor and Julian Richards, “A ‘Productive Site’ at Bidford-on-Avon, Warwickshire: Salt, Communication and Trade in Anglo-Saxon England,” in S. Worrell, G. Egan, J. Naylor, K. Leahy and M. Lewis (eds.), *A Decade of Discovery. Proceedings of the Portable Antiquities Scheme Conference 2007*, BAR British Series 520 (2010), 193-200, at 193-200.

point and toll station for loads of salt.¹³⁹ The metal objects and coins recovered from the area are indicative of a wide network of connections stretching across England and to the Continent. The metalwork recovered consists primarily of eighteen strap-ends with a small number each of hooked tags, buckles, and mounts, and a single pin.¹⁴⁰ The hooked tags are uncommon in the midlands and probably arrived on site with travelers from eastern England.¹⁴¹ Also of note is a finely-wrought, eighth-century gold mount which is the lone piece of high-end metalwork recovered to date.¹⁴²

The coin finds from the Bidford-on-Avon area consist of seventeen late seventh- to mid eighth-century *sceattas* and ten pennies dating from circa 765 to 825.¹⁴³ Of the seventeen *sceattas* recovered around Bidford-on-Avon, seven are definitively Continental and another is possibly from the Low Countries, indicating the presence of foreign traders or those who had access to foreign currency.¹⁴⁴ The attributable, English *sceattas* also show extra-regional connections as two are from London and one is from Kent.¹⁴⁵ The later pennies include three issued by of Eadwald of East Anglia, further reinforcing connections with the east.¹⁴⁶ The overall distribution of the coin finds at

¹³⁹ Maddicott, "London and Droitwich," at 46, Naylor and Richards, "A 'Productive Site' at Bidford-on-Avon," 194.

¹⁴⁰ Naylor and Richards, "A 'Productive Site' at Bidford-on-Avon," 197-8.

¹⁴¹ Naylor and Richards, "A 'Productive Site' at Bidford-on-Avon," 198.

¹⁴² Naylor and Richards, "A 'Productive Site' at Bidford-on-Avon," 198.

¹⁴³ Naylor and Richards, "A 'Productive Site' at Bidford-on-Avon," 194-7.

¹⁴⁴ Naylor and Richards, "A 'Productive Site' at Bidford-on-Avon," 195.

¹⁴⁵ Naylor and Richards, "A 'Productive Site' at Bidford-on-Avon," 195.

¹⁴⁶ Naylor and Richards, "A 'Productive Site' at Bidford-on-Avon," 195.

Bidford-on-Avon follows Ryknild Street along the parish from north to south as would be expected from cargos traveling from Droitwich.¹⁴⁷

Some of the salt traveling south-east from Droitwich through Bidford-on-Avon may have made its way to the emporium at London either via Ryknild Street to Waitling Street or via Rynild Street to the Fosse Way and into the Thames valley.¹⁴⁸ Based upon its established connections with Worcester, London may have also been the destination of some of the salt shipped down the Severn. The numerous inhabitants of the emporium would have consumed a great deal of salt and London would, therefore, have been an attractive node on in the distribution network for shipments heading south and east. It is hard to imagine that the largest population center in Mercian territory would not be an important stop on the salt traders' itineraries. It is also a likely stopover for some of the foreign traders who may have visited Bidford-on-Avon.

Unfortunately, the salt produced at Droitwich, like so many other consumables, left no discernible trace at its final destinations. Nevertheless, the documentary evidence as well as the ancillary archaeological evidence and numismatic data from Bidford-on-Avon indicate strong connections with the trade taking place at the emporia.

We should also consider that some interests of the early English kings had in the trade and craft production taking place at the major emporia were more direct than just the collection of tolls. The kings in England may have

¹⁴⁷ Naylor and Richards, "A 'Productive Site' at Bidford-on-Avon," 195-6.

¹⁴⁸ Maddicott, "London and Droitwich," at 47-8, Naylor and Richards, "A 'Productive Site' at Bidford-on-Avon," 199.

also participated in the economy of the emporia at a local level, distributing some of the produce from their *feorm* to the provisioning of the emporia.¹⁴⁹ This is distinctly possible, as the kings themselves would, most likely, have been no less keen than their landholding subjects to convert their agricultural surplus into more permanent forms of wealth.

The totality of the evidence from the major emporia at Ipswich, London, Southampton, and York presents us with settlements whose organization and economies were far more complex and diverse than has been previously understood. We also see that these settlements and the dramatic expansion they underwent in the eighth century were the product of the interests and actions of a wide spectrum of people, not just gift-seeking kings and migratory traders. Regional elites such as the abbesses of Minster-in-Thanet, the Abbot of Reculver, and the bishops of London, Worcester, and Rochester as well as the lords who controlled Yarnton, Quarrington, and Brandon contributed to the economic and social systems that built the major emporia and transformed their hinterlands to be more efficient and more productive, as did the craftsmen and traders who lived in the emporia and the farmers who raised the food to feed them. Indeed, the populations of craftsmen who lived in the emporia at Ipswich, London, Southampton, and York acted as great human machines that converted the agricultural surplus of their hinterlands into finished goods that, in turn, fed the demands of both the traders and their clients. These towns were the physical spaces where the economic intentions

¹⁴⁹ J.R. Maddicott, "Prosperity and Power in the Age of Bede and Beowulf," *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 117 (2002), 49-71, at 61.

of all of these constituencies were actualized. It was in these towns where, on a scale greater than anywhere else in England; rural elites could exchange their surplus for finished goods or imported exotica or coins, where local and foreign traders could meet and exchange their wares, where the homes and workshops of craftsmen could be situated to best take advantage of the presence of the aforementioned traders and the riverine, marine, and overland trade routes they traveled.

The decline of the emporia, or perhaps more accurately the contraction and relocation of their trade and craft production, which began in the late-eighth century was brought about in part by one of the very forces that influenced their dramatic rise to prominence a century and a half before, contact with sea-going foreigners. In this instance it was viking raiders and invaders and this new relationship, at least in the short term, was not as conducive to economic and urban growth as it had been with the Frisians. In what appears to have been a response to the viking threat, new construction at Lundenwic declined dramatically, a number of existing buildings were abandoned and a defensive ditch was dug around what remained of the core of the settlement during the ninth century.¹⁵⁰ The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* records the first documented viking attack on Lundenwic as having taken place in 842. Derek Keene has argued that this attack disrupted Lundenwic's trade and encouraged its inhabitants to seek refuge behind what remained of the walls of

¹⁵⁰ Malcolm, Bowsher and Cowie, *Middle Saxon London*, 110-1.

the old Roman city where, along with the newly fortified site at Southwark, commerce and craft production resumed in the tenth century.¹⁵¹

The evidence from Ipswich displays a similar pattern to that of Lundenwic. Keith Wade has demonstrated that Ipswich was also in decline in at the end of the eighth century and that it too had begun to recover by end of the ninth century.¹⁵² Wade also indicates that the town was fortified in the early tenth century, an element that would become a key feature of towns in the late Anglo-Saxon period.¹⁵³

The decline of the emporium at York culminated with its fall to the vikings in 867. The recovery of trade, craft production and urban life in general at York in the tenth century was not facilitated by the reestablishment of its earlier trade networks, but rather by the forging of new connections based on the viking leaders' and settlers' ties to Scandinavia. This new North Sea trade fuelled the rebirth of York and the rise of new towns in viking controlled areas such as Lincoln and became a dynamic aspect of England's larger economy in the tenth and eleventh centuries.

The emporia may not have endured in their eighth-century form but they were the first true towns to emerge since the decline of Roman authority in Britain and they represented the increasing complexity of the economic, social, and political networks of Anglo-Saxon England and the power of its landed elites' and kings' desire to accumulate wealth.

¹⁵¹ Derek Keene, "London from the Post-Roman Period to 1300," in D. M. Palliser (ed.), *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain* (2000), 187-216, at 190-3.

¹⁵² Wade, "Ipswich," 97.

¹⁵³ Wade, "Ipswich," 97.

3. The West Saxon *Burhs* and the Development of Towns

At the beginning of the ninth century there were only a handful of places in England that might be identified as towns:¹ the *emporia* at Southampton, London, Ipswich, and York, as well as Canterbury.² In contrast, by the death of Edward the Elder, in 924, there is textual, archaeological, and numismatic evidence suggesting that there were at least thirty sites that could be classified as towns.³ During the intervening century and a quarter, the number and nature of settlements that might, in some way, be classified as towns underwent a profound change. There was a vast increase in the number of these settlements, a much wider geographic distribution, and they were fortified. No longer just *emporia* (*wics*), locations to control trade, craft-

¹ The definition of a town used here is that of Martin Biddle, that a place be "accepted as a town if it possessed or fulfilled more than one of the following criteria: 1 Defences 2 A planned street system 3 A market(s) 4 A mint 5 Legal autonomy 6 A role as a central place 7 A relatively large and dense population 8 A diversified economic base 9 Plots and houses of 'urban' type 10 Social differentiation 11 Complex religious organization 12 A judicial centre," in Martin Biddle, "Towns," in D.M.Wilson (ed.), *The Archaeology of Anglo-Saxon England* (London, 1976), 99-150. For more on the use of Biddle's criteria and other definitions see David Hill, "The Saxon Period," in J. Schofield and R. Leech (eds.), *Urban Archaeology*, CBA Research Report, 61 (1987), 46-53, at 47 and Christopher Scull, "Urban Centres in Pre-Viking England?," in J. Hines (ed.), *The Anglo-Saxons From Migration Period to the Eighth Century An Ethnographic Perspective*, (San Marino, 1997), 269-97, at 271-3.

² David Hill, "The Eighth-Century Urban Landscape," in D. Hill and M. Worthington (eds.), *Aethelbald and Offa: Two Eighth-Century Kings of Mercia: Papers from a Conference Held in Manchester in 2000: Manchester Centre for Anglo-Saxon Studies*, BAR British Series, 383 (2005), 97-102, at 97.

³ Mark Blackburn, "Mints, Burhs, and the Grately Code Cap. 14.2," in D. Hill and A. R. Rumble (eds.), *The Defence of Wessex: The Burghal Hidage and Anglo-Saxon Fortifications* (1996), 160-75, at 160, 6.

production, and the redistribution of resources; these settlements were being adapted to serve at least one additional function—defense.

There has been a great deal written about the ninth- and tenth-century origin of the Anglo-Saxon towns, and most modern historians cite Alfred the Great and his creation of a network of fortified settlements, known as *burhs*, in response to the viking incursions as the catalyst to the development of the later Anglo-Saxon towns.⁴ Indeed, there has been a general consensus that the *burhs* founded by Alfred and his immediate successors; Edward the Elder, Æthelstan, and his daughter Æthelflæd and her husband, Ealdorman Æthelred, were the seeds from which the later Anglo-Saxon towns sprung. Nevertheless, there has been a continuing debate over whether or not the *burhs* were originally intended to be towns and at what stage in their development they could be classified as such. What this chapter will argue is that some of the best evidence for determining whether or not the *burhs* were intended to be towns or should be classified as towns—the very language used to describe them in contemporary sources—has been largely overlooked.

At the turn of the twentieth century, the prevailing thought, based on F.W. Maitland's "garrison theory," was that Alfred's *burhs* were strictly frontier fortresses built to repel the viking threat and that, over the next hundred years, the later Anglo-Saxon towns developed in and around them to

⁴ Maitland, *Domesday Book and Beyond*, 184-92, Carl Stephenson, *Borough and Town a Study of Urban Origins in England* (Cambridge, 1933), , Tait, *The Medieval English Borough*, 15-29, Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, 526-38, Biddle, "Towns," 202, Richard Abels, *Alfred the Great: War, Kingship, and Culture in Anglo-Saxon England* (New York, 1998), 194-218.

service the needs of their garrisons.⁵ Despite its initial influence, Maitland's theory was discredited by James Tait in 1936 with the publication of *The Medieval English Borough*.⁶ In this groundbreaking work Tait established that, from their very inception, Alfred intended many of his *burhs* to be more than just fortresses. Citing the placement of markets and mints within some *burhs*, Tait argued that Alfred intended many of them to be centers of trade and royal administration as well as defense—in short to be towns.⁷ In Tait's view, the ability to serve as a fortress was just one of several important functions that Alfred and his successors expected their *burhs* to perform. Protecting the towns' other functions—trade, minting, craft production, and royal administration—behind a wall was simply a necessary response to the ever-present viking threat.⁸ As Tait stated, “circumstances decided that most towns should grow up behind walls.”⁹ And, it is Tait's view that has become the basis for most modern interpretations of Alfred's role in the development of the later Anglo-Saxon towns. Indeed, Tait's influence was clearly a factor when Sir Frank Stenton declared, definitively, in his *Anglo-Saxon England* that the Anglo-Saxon town had a market, a mint, and a wall.¹⁰

In the last few decades, historians and archaeologists, including Martin Biddle, David Hill, Nicholas Brooks, and Richard Abels, have built upon the work of Tait and Stenton, reinforcing their ideas with new evidence drawn from

⁵ Maitland, *Domesday Book and Beyond*, 184-92.

⁶ Tait, *The Medieval English Borough*, 26-7.

⁷ Tait, *The Medieval English Borough*, 20-7.

⁸ Tait, *The Medieval English Borough*, 22-3.

⁹ Tait, *The Medieval English Borough*, 22.

¹⁰ Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, 526-8.

archaeological excavations and numismatic studies as well as the textual sources.¹¹ Like Tait, these pro-town historians point to the organized street plans of some *burhs*, the creation of new mints within a number of *burhs*, and the early growth of places such as Winchester, London, and Wallingford as evidence that Alfred's intention was to found towns.¹² There is also a growing body of evidence that indicates that Alfred was literally and figuratively building on a preexisting tradition of constructing fortified settlements that was in effect in Wessex from at least the 850's and perhaps earlier in other kingdoms.¹³ Indeed, recently, Steven Bassett has put forth a strong argument for the existence of earlier Mercian fortifications at Hereford, Tamworth, Winchcombe, and Worcester that pre-dated the Alfredian *burhs*.¹⁴

Before proceeding, it is important to stress that Alfred's intent to establish towns did not universally result in immediate—or even eventual—commercial activity within the *burhs* or that the distinctly defensive characteristics of the *burhs* should be discounted. The lack of archaeological evidence for immediate, intensive commercial development at most of the *burh* sites has even led some historians, including Grenville Astill and Richard Britnell, to argue, *a la* Maitland, that the ninth-century *burhs* were primarily if

¹¹ Biddle, "Towns," 124-34. Hill, "Towns as Structures," 202, Abels, *Alfred the Great*, 194-208.

¹² Biddle, "Towns," 99-150.

¹³ Nicholas Brooks, "The Administrative Background to the Burghal Hidage," in D. Hill and A. R. Rumble (eds.), *The Defence of Wessex: The Burghal Hidage and Anglo-Saxon Fortifications* (1996), 128-50, at 128-9, Hill, "The Eighth-Century," 100, Jeremy Haslam, "Market and Fortress in England in the Reign of Offa," *World Archaeology*, 19 (1987), 76-93, at 89.

¹⁴ Steven Bassett, "Divide and Rule? The Military Infrastructure of Eighth- and Ninth-Century Mercia," *Early Medieval Europe*, 15 (2007), 53-85, at 53-85, Steven Bassett, "The Middle and Late Anglo-Saxon Defences of Western Mercian Towns," *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History*, 15 (2008), 180-239, at 180-239.

not exclusively intended to be military institutions and remained so until the late-tenth century, when they began to develop a more commercial character.¹⁵ Although the conclusions drawn about the apparent state of commercial development at Cricklade and Gloucester during the late-ninth and early-tenth centuries may indeed be valid, the evidence, perhaps, speaks more to a lack of immediate success than intent. Moreover, the state of Cricklade and Gloucester stand in stark contrast to the rapid growth of Winchester.¹⁶ And, it should not be surprising that the *burhs* developed at different rates based upon their relative value as political and economic centers. Nigel Baker and Richard Holt, for example, have noted two such divergent evolutions in their examination of the different histories of Gloucester and Worcester in the late Anglo-Saxon period.¹⁷

Although the current, extant archaeological evidence from the ninth- and tenth-century *burhs* is contradictory with regard to the intentions of their founders, the textual and numismatic evidence, when examined closely, provides evidence to support the idea that the *burhs* were intended to function as towns from their inception and, perhaps more importantly, that they were perceived to be towns by contemporaries. Indeed, for some ninth- and tenth-century authors and translators, the *burhs* were towns that were worthy of being described in the texts in the same manner as the great classical cities. An

¹⁵ Astill, "General Survey," 27, Richard Britnell, "The Economy of British Towns 600-1300," in D. M. Palliser (ed.), *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain* (2000), 105-26, at 110.

¹⁶ Biddle, "Towns," 129-34.

¹⁷ Nigel Baker and Richard Holt, *Urban Growth and the Medieval Church: Gloucester and Worcester* (Aldershot, 2004), 366-9.

examination of the language used in contemporary sources, both Latin and Anglo-Saxon, to describe the fortified settlements founded by Alfred and his immediate successors reveals that contemporary authors chose to describe these settlements using the same words they employed when describing long-established Continental, African, and Middle Eastern cities, and it is this linguistic equivalency that provides the strongest evidence of the English founders' of towns intentions.

In his *Life of King Alfred*, Asser lauded Alfred's urban program effusing:

"What shall I say of the cities and towns, which he restored, and of others, which he built, where none had been before?"¹⁸

For Asser, there was no ambiguity about Alfred's intentions or the nature of his new, fortified settlements; in the Latin, Asser rendered the king's foundations as *civitatus et urbes*—"cities and towns." To Asser, Alfred's *burhs* were not simply fortresses or defensive works, such as the *munitio* that the vikings constructed at Nottingham in 868 or the *castellum* they built outside the gates of Rochester in 884: they were far more substantial and more permanent settlements.¹⁹ Asser's choice of the words *civitas* and *urbs* indicates that he saw Alfred's *burhs* as having the characteristics of classical cities and towns. More specifically, in his *Life of King Alfred*, Asser used *civitas* to describe Winchester, Canterbury, London, York, and Rochester.²⁰ This is the same term he used to describe Paris when discussing the viking siege of 886, and he was

¹⁸ John Asser, *Asser's Life of King Alfred: Together with the Annals of Saint Neots Erroneously Ascribed to Asser*, ed. W. H. Stevenson and D. Whitelock (Oxford, 1959), 77.

¹⁹ Asser, *Life of King Alfred*, 25, 50.

²⁰ Asser, *Life of King Alfred*, 5, 17, 22, 50, 65, 8.

particular in stating that that city was bravely defended by its citizen, its *civis*, rather than its garrison or an army.²¹ This is an indication that Asser believed that it was Paris' resident population that came to its defense in its time of need, rather than some outside military force.

In contrast to those settlements he viewed as cities, Asser was also specific in the term he used to describe royal villas: *villa regia*. Asser used *villa regia* to describe Wantage, Chippenham, Wedmore, and Reading; and there has been no question of the accuracy of his descriptions with regard to these sites.²² Why, then, should we doubt that that Asser knew or, at the very least, believed Winchester, Canterbury, London, York, and Paris to be cities? In many areas, it is easy to dismiss Asser's estimation of Alfred's achievements as hyperbole or mere flattery, but, in terms of the founding of towns, as Richard Abels states, "here for once, Alfred's accomplishments match, if not exceed, the praise lavished upon him by his faithful servant."²³ During his reign, Alfred both literally and figuratively laid the foundation for an exponential increase in the number of towns in England.²⁴ It must have been impressive and inspiring for witnesses like Asser to watch as the ruined walls of the old Roman towns were rebuilt.²⁵ In less than a decade Alfred went from an all-but-defeated fugitive hiding in the wilds of Somerset to the resurrector and rebuilder of Roman cities and towns and the founder of his own new ones. In Asser's terms,

²¹ Asser, *Life of King Alfred*, 70-1.

²² Asser, *Life of King Alfred*, 1, 27.

²³ Abels, *Alfred the Great*, 201.

²⁴ Hill, "Towns as Structures," 200-15.

²⁵ Asser, *Life of King Alfred*, 77.

Alfred had gone from building his *arcem*, literally a strongbox, at Athelney to restoring the city, *civitas*, of London and making it habitable once again.²⁶

The language used in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and the group of ninth- and tenth-century Latin to Old English translations, generally held to be the product of Alfred's court,²⁷ to describe the fortified settlements founded and restored by Alfred and his successors' mirrors Asser's usage and provides further insight into the intended nature of these settlements. The key to establishing Alfred's and his successors' intent in founding their defended settlements lies in understanding the meaning of the word used to describe these sites in the ninth- and early tenth-century Anglo-Saxon sources—*burh*. Unfortunately, *burh* presents a problem for the study of Anglo-Saxon towns in that, as with so many words, its meaning was not static. The variability of its meaning over time has added fuel to the debate about what Alfred's and his successors' *burhs* were intended to be. Indeed, much of the debate surrounding Alfred's intentions in constructing his network of *burhs* is rooted in our own, modern confusion about the meaning of this Old English word. This confusion is a result of the apparent fluidity of *burh*'s meaning during the centuries between the *adventis* and the Norman Conquest. As David Hill and Alexander Rumble have stated, the "Old English usage [of *burh*] could range from a meaning of 'pre-existing earth-work', through meanings concerned with 'fortification', 'stockaded enclosure', 'walled monastic site', to 'late Anglo-

²⁶ Asser, *Life of King Alfred*, 55, 83.

²⁷ Janet Bately, "The Alfredian Canon Revisited: One Hundred Years On," in T. Reuter (ed.), *Alfred the Great: Papers from the Eleventh-Centenary Conferences* (2003), 107-20, at 107-12.

Saxon town’.”²⁸ Nevertheless, if the context in which the word *burh* and its derivations (*byrig* and *burg*) was used in the ninth- and tenth-century Old English sources is examined, a more precise pattern of usage and, therefore, a more precise contemporary definition of the word becomes apparent. This pattern indicates that, at least during the period in question, the most common meaning for the word *burh* was a “walled city” or “town.” Indeed, as we shall see, for the authors and translators of England, many of the great cities of the ancient and medieval world—including Rome, Constantinople, Jerusalem, and Alexandria—were *burhs*.

A close examination of Manuscript A of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* reveals that when the word *burh* or one of its derivations is used, it is used in relation to places that, with very few exceptions, fulfilled Biddle’s criteria for a town by the tenth century if not earlier.²⁹ Furthermore, *burh* is used almost exclusively to refer to those fortified settlements founded or restored by English kings; and it is never used in reference to viking fortresses or defenses, which are always *fæstene* or *geweorc*.³⁰ This pattern of usage can be seen in the annal for 893, in which the fortifications built by Hæsten and his vikings are described as *wudufæstene*, *wæterfæstene*, *fæstene*, and *geweorc* in

²⁸ David Hill and Alexander R. Rumble, “Introduction,” in D. Hill and A. R. Rumble (eds.), *The Defence of Wessex: The Burghal Hidage and Anglo-Saxon Fortifications* (1996), 1-4, at 3. See also Simon Draper, “The Significance of Old English *Burh* in Anglo-Saxon England,” in S. Crawford and H. Hamerow (eds.), *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History*, Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History, 15 (2008), 240-53, at 240-50.

²⁹ See appendix A.

³⁰ ASC (A), s.a. 868., 877, 878, 885, 892, 893, 917. See also Hill, “The Origins of Alfred’s Urban Policies,”

contrast to the *burhs* which Alfred's men held—Exeter the *burg*, and *Lundenbyrg*.³¹

The derivation *burg* is used to describe a specific settlement twenty-five times in Manuscript A of the *Chronicle*, and in every instance save one, it refers to an English settlement that was inarguably a town by the time of the Domesday survey.³² The lone exception is a reference to Tempsford, in the annal for 921, an entry that also refers to the construction of a *geweorc* at Tempsford.³³ The use of *geweorc* to describe the construction at Tempsford may be an indication that it was only intended to be a temporary fortification.³⁴ *Burg* is also used in the plural to describe various settlements five times. In the five instances where the derivation *byrig* appears, it is used to describe London,³⁵ Maldon,³⁶ Stamford,³⁷ Wigmore,³⁸ and, as a group, the towns of western Mercia.³⁹ This pattern of usage demonstrates that, just as with Asser, the scribes and patron, or patrons, of the *Chronicle* perceived or, perhaps, wished to establish that there was a difference in the nature of the temporary fortifications established by the vikings and the fortified settlements erected by the English kings.

In order to understand the meaning of *burh* in the *Chronicle* it is necessary to examine the context in which it is used in other contemporary

³¹ ASC (a), s.a. 893.

³² See Appendix B.

³³ ASC (a), s.a. 917.

³⁴ Hill, "The Origins of Alfred's Urban Policies,"

³⁵ ASC (a), s.a. 894.

³⁶ ASC (a), s.a. 917.

³⁷ ASC (a), s.a. 918.

³⁸ ASC (a), s.a. 917.

³⁹ ASC (a), s.a. 893.

sources. The *Old English Orosius* is, perhaps, the most valuable comparative source for determining what the current meaning of the word *burh* was during the ninth and tenth centuries. In the *Old English Orosius* the word *burh* or one of its derivations is used again and again to describe the great cities of the ancient and early medieval world. For the translator of the *Old English Orosius*, Jerusalem, Constantinople, Alexandria, and Athens were all *burhs* and all were cities that would have been familiar, either physically or intellectually, to the literate men of ninth- and tenth-century England.⁴⁰ Indeed, these cities were not places that would be mistaken as mere fortresses by anyone sophisticated enough to undertake a translation of Orosius. Moreover, of the two hundred instances where *burh* or one of its derivations occurs in the *Old English Orosius* it is always used in relation to a city or town and never to a fortress or other exclusively military structure.⁴¹

The most telling example and the best benchmark city found in the *Old English Orosius* is Rome. Throughout the *Old English Orosius*, the city of Rome is referred to as *Romeburg*.⁴² For example, the founding of the city is translated as “*hu Remus & Romulus þa gebroþor getimbredan Romeburg on Italiam.*”⁴³ This particular usage appears to be intended to specify the city of Rome, as opposed to the Roman Empire, and in doing this indicates that

⁴⁰ Michael Lapidge, "Byzantium, Rome and England in the Early Middle Ages," *Roma Fra Oriente E Occidente*, Centro Di Studi Sull'alto Medioevo (2002), 363-75, Simon Keynes, "Anglo-Saxon Entries in the 'Liber Vitae' of Brescia," in J. Roberts, J. L. Nelson and M. Godden (eds.), *Alfred the Wise: Studies in Honour of Janet Bately on the Occasion of Her Sixty-Fifth Birthday* (1997), 99-119, at 99-119.

⁴¹ See Appendix C.

⁴² *The Old English Orosius*, ed. J. Bately (London, 1980), 2.

⁴³ *The Old English Orosius*, 2.

Orosius based his chronology on the date of the founding of the city. In England, the translator of the *Old English Orosius* was not alone in using this construction: Rome was referred also to as *Romeburh* by both the translator of the *Old English Boethius*⁴⁴ and the translator of the Old English version of Augustine's *Soliloquies*.⁴⁵ Jane Roberts has also noted a similar pattern of usage in the *Old English Martyrology*, where *Romeburh* was employed to indicate that the tombs of certain saints were located within the city.⁴⁶

With regard to the pattern of usage outlined above, it is difficult to believe that the most literate men of ninth- and tenth-century England would have conceived the *burh* of Rome as nothing more than a fortress. Indeed, Susan Irvine has argued that the treatment of Rome and its history in the literary sources from Alfred's reign—the *Old English Boethius*, the *Old English Orosius*, and the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*—indicates that “to educated Anglo-Saxons Rome was the centre of civilization and Christianity.”⁴⁷ Nicholas Howe has even gone so far as to hypothesize that by the ninth-century Anglo-Saxons regarded Rome as “their capital city,” in that all spiritual authority emanated outward from that city.⁴⁸ It is unlikely, then, that these same authors and

⁴⁴ *King Alfred's Anglo-Saxon Version of Boethius De Consolatione Philosophiae: With a Literal English Translation, Notes, and Glossary*, ed. S. Fox and M. F. Tupper (London, 1901), 1.

⁴⁵ *King Alfred's Old English Version of St. Augustine's Soliloquies*, ed. H. L. Hargrove (New York, 1902),

⁴⁶ Jane Roberts, “*Fela Martyra* ‘Many Martyrs’: A Different View of Orosius's City,” in J. Roberts, J. L. Nelson and M. Godden (eds.), *Alfred the Wise: Studies in Honour of Janet Batley on the Occasion of Her Sixty-Fifth Birthday* (1997), 155-78, at 155, *King Alfred's Old English Version of St. Augustine's Soliloquies*,

⁴⁷ Susan Irvine, “The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and the Idea of Rome in Alfredian Literature,” in T. Reuter (ed.), *Alfred the Great: Papers from the Eleventh-Centenary Conferences*, *Studies in Early Medieval Britain*, 3 (2003), 63-78, at 74.

⁴⁸ Nicholas Howe, *Writing the Map of Anglo-Saxon England: Essays in Cultural Geography* (New Haven, 2008), 101-24.

translators would append to Rome an ending that would reduce it, particularly when we know that Alfred and a number of members of his court travelled to Rome and were familiar with the size and the character of the city.⁴⁹ And Rome, despite its considerable decline, was still the largest city in Europe and must have had a population in excess of twenty thousand.⁵⁰

The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* contains an interesting parallel to the *Orosius* translator's treatment of Rome. From the mid-ninth century on, the annals that discuss London refer to it as *Lundenburg*. This includes the account of the viking raid of 851 and, in this instance, it appears that this choice of usage was made to indicate that the attack was against the settled area within the old Roman walls rather than the extramural emporium site.⁵¹ *Lundenburg* is also the term used in the annal for 886, which describes how Alfred restored the city and placed it under the control of Ealdorman Æthelred.⁵² This use of a *burh* suffix to denote both Rome and London as walled cities is probably not coincidental, as both manuscripts may be the work of the same scribe. Indeed, the primary hand of the Lauderdale manuscript of *Orosius* appears to be the same as that of the second scribe of the Winchester manuscript of the

⁴⁹ Keynes, "Anglo-Saxon Entries," 99-101, Stephen Matthews, *The Road to Rome: Travel and Travellers between England and Italy in the Anglo-Saxon Centuries* (Oxford, England, 2007), 66-7.

⁵⁰ Chris Wickham, "The Romans According to Their Malign Custom: Rome in Italy in the Late Ninth and Tenth Centuries," in J. M. H. Smith (ed.), *Early Medieval Rome and the Christian West : Essays in Honour of Donald A. Bullough*, The Medieval Mediterranean, 28 (2000), 151-68, at 162-6, See also Thomas F.X. Noble, "Paradoxes and Possibilities in the Sources for Roman Society in the Early Middle Ages," in J. M. H. Smith (ed.), *Early Medieval Rome and the Christian West : Essays in Honour of Donald A. Bullough*, The Medieval Mediterranean, 28 (2000), 55-84, at 55-72.

⁵¹ Derek Keene, "Alfred and London," in T. Reuter (ed.), *Alfred the Great: Papers from the Eleventh-Centenary Conferences*, Studies in Early Medieval Britain, 3 (2003), 235-50, at 239.

⁵² Keene, "Alfred and London," 241-2.

Chronicle.⁵³ It is telling that it was at this point, during the reign of Alfred, that the sources began describing London as a *burh* since it was at this time that a large proportion of the population likely migrated from the old, open emporium site and into newly restored walled town.⁵⁴

A comparison of the use of *burh* in both the *Old English Orosius* and the *Chronicle* at a minimum indicates that in ninth- and tenth-century England it was appropriate to use the same word to describe London and Winchester and Rome and Jerusalem. We know that at least a portion of the A manuscript of the *Chronicle* can be attributed to the Orosius translator and, therefore, we can eliminate the possibility that the scribes involved in each manuscript were unaware of the other. Asser, the translator of the *Old English Orosius*, and the compilers of the *Chronicle* all took steps to differentiate temporary fortifications, castles, and fortresses from walled cities and towns. Asser's use of *munitio* and *castellum* denotes a difference between strictly defensive structures and cities like Winchester, London, and Paris. *The Chronicles* use of *feastene* and *geweork* serves a similar purpose. Their careful choice of terminology set the *burhs* on a higher level.

In the Old English translation of Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy*, Reason, speaking hypothetically of fame and the many diverse nations and languages of the world, asks, "how can any great man's name individually come there, when no man there even hears the name of the city or the land of

⁵³ *The Old English Orosius*, xxiii.

⁵⁴ Keene, "Alfred and London," 243.

which he is an inhabitant?"⁵⁵ Immediately following this inquiry, Reason asks the same question about a Roman in Scythia where they had not heard of the city of Rome.⁵⁶ In both cases, the Anglo-Saxon word chosen by the translator for city was *burge*. Throughout the Old English Boethius *burh* was the word of choice when describing a city. The same pattern can be seen in the Old English translation of the first fifty Psalms in which Jerusalem and Babylon are described as *burhs*.⁵⁷

Surprisingly, the one tenth-century source in which the word *burh* does not appear is the so-called *Burghal Hidage*. And, yet, it has been the most influential source in defining what sites were *burhs* and what the *burhs* were intended to be.⁵⁸ In the simplest of terms, the *Burghal Hidage* is a list containing the names of thirty-three fortified sites along with the number of hides assigned to each site for the maintenance of its fortifications.⁵⁹ Most scholars date the original compilation of the *Burghal Hidage* to the beginning of the tenth century, during the reign of Edward the Elder (c.915), and believe it is based on an earlier organizational scheme that was most likely the work of Alfred.⁶⁰ There are two extant versions of the *Burghal Hidage* (A and B): the documents are almost identical in terms of the list of sites and the number of

⁵⁵ *King Alfred's Old English Version of Boethius De Consolatione Philosophiae*, ed. W. J. Sedgefield (Oxford, 1899), 43.

⁵⁶ *King Alfred's Old English Version of Boethius*, 43.

⁵⁷ *King Alfred's Old English Prose Translation of the First Fifty Psalms*, ed. P. P. Ó Néill (Cambridge, Mass., 2001), 108, 11, 18, 20, 34, 55, 57, 59.

⁵⁸ David Hill, "The Development of Burghal Hidage Studies: A Bibliographical Review," in D. Hill and A. R. Rumble (eds.), *The Defence of Wessex: The Burghal Hidage and Anglo-Saxon Fortifications* (1996), 5-13, at 5-13.

⁵⁹ Alexander R. Rumble, "The Known Manuscripts of the Burghal Hidage," in D. Hill and A. R. Rumble (eds.), *The Defence of Wessex: The Burghal Hidage and Anglo-Saxon Fortifications* (1996), 36-58, at 39.

⁶⁰ Brooks, "The Administrative Background," 128-9.

hides assigned to them, but they differ in the additional material supplied after the list.⁶¹ Version A, most likely the earlier of the two,⁶² contains the list and the formula for calculating the ratio of hides required to maintain specific lengths of wall, which is known to modern historians as “the calculation.”⁶³ Version B contains the same list of fortified sites, excluding Burpham, Wareham, and Bridport and adding Shaftesbury, but it does not include “the calculation.”⁶⁴ Version B also contains additional material, dubbed “the appendix,” a postscript which lists the total hidage for the West Saxons from the *Tribal Hidage* and the hidage for Warwick and Worcester.⁶⁵ Version B also equates Pilton with Barnstaple via the insertion of the phrase “that is, Barnstaple” in the entry for Pilton.⁶⁶ Of the twenty-seven matching entries in both lists, there are also seven differences in hidage values (see Table 1.1).

⁶¹ Rumble, “The Known Manuscripts,” 39.

⁶² Rumble, “The Known Manuscripts,” 39.

⁶³ Rumble, “The Known Manuscripts,” 39.

⁶⁴ Rumble, “The Known Manuscripts,” 39.

⁶⁵ Rumble, “The Known Manuscripts,” 39.

⁶⁶ Rumble, “The Known Manuscripts,” 39.

Table 3.1 Comparison of the Two Extent Versions of The Burghal

Burh	Hidage: ⁶⁷	
	Version A Hides	Version B Hides
Axbridge	400	400
Bath	1000	1000
Bridport	760	Not included
Buckingham	1600	Figure not included
Burpham	720	Not included
Chichester	1500	1500
Chisbury	500	700
Cricklade	1400	1500
Eashing	600	500
Eorpeburnan	324	324
Exeter	734	734
Halwell	300	300
Hastings	500	500
Langport	600	600
Lewes	1200	1300
Lydford	140	140
Lyng	100	100
Malmesbury	1200	2200
Oxford	1500	1300
Pilton/[B. that is Barnstaple]	360	360
Portchester	500	500
Sashes	1000	1000
Shaftesbury	Not included	700
Southampton	150	150
Southwark	1800	1800
Twynam (Christchurch)	470	460
Wallingford	2400	2400

⁶⁷ Compiled from Versions A and B compiled and redacted in David Hill and Alexander R. Rumble, *The Defence of Wessex: The Burghal Hidage and Anglo-Saxon Fortifications* (Manchester, 1996), 14-31.

Burh	Version A Hides	Version B Hides
Wareham	1600	Not included
Warwick	Not included	2400
Watchet	513	513
Wilton	1400	1400
Winchester	2400	2400
Worcester	Not included	1200

Indeed, there is no evidence indicating that the *Burghal Hidage* was created to be a list of *burhs*, that is towns. Rather, it was more likely a list of sites with fortifications that were part of a system of defense.⁶⁸ The fact that the *Burghal Hidage* lists many sites that are described as *burhs* in other sources or that can be classified as *burhs* based on their archaeological evidence is simply the product of those sites having fortifications that needed to be maintained. The name *Burghal Hidage*, coined by F. W. Maitland, is simply an artifact of the nineteenth century.⁶⁹ From the limited evidence we have, we can see that the sites listed in the *Burghal Hidage* were actually a mix of places with varying aspects and degrees of what we would call urban characteristics: including some, such as Eashing and Sashes, which were clearly intended to serve only as frontier fortresses and were comprised of little more than their defenses.⁷⁰ Other *Burghal Hidage* sites were places, such as Southampton and Winchester, that had long served a number of functions associated with towns.⁷¹ The fortifications at Southwark provided additional protection for the settlement at London, which was already home to an episcopal church and palace, a royal hall, and an important trading center.⁷²

If the sites listed in the *Burghal Hidage* are examined as a whole, it is apparent that more than half of the fortified sites became towns. If we then examine the particulars of the sites, we can see that that there were certain

⁶⁸ Jeremy Haslam, "King Alfred and the Vikings: Strategies and Tactics 876-886 AD," *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History*, 13 (2006), 122-54, at 138.

⁶⁹ Maitland, *Domesday Book and Beyond*, 187.

⁷⁰ Hill, "Towns as Structures," 202.

⁷¹ Hill, "Towns as Structures," 201-5.

⁷² Keene, "The Cambridge Urban History," 187-90.

factors, in addition to their defences, that indicated that many were intended to be towns. David Hill has demonstrated that, in almost every case, if the enclosed area of the site was greater than sixteen acres, then the site was intended to be a town.⁷³ The large enclosure allowed for the establishment of an intramural market and residences. As James Tait noted, having a mint was another key indicator that Alfred and his successors intended to establish towns.⁷⁴ The expansion of towns during the ninth and tenth centuries coincided with an expansion in the number of royal mints and a series of monetary reforms. Mark Blackburn has shown that the number of mints grew dramatically under Alfred and his heirs, and that ten of the sites listed in the Burghal Hidage contained new mints.⁷⁵ Of the twenty-three sites listed on the Burghal Hidage that had mints at some period during the ninth and tenth centuries, twenty-two survived as viable towns in 1066.⁷⁶ The only one that did not, Burpham, does not appear to have been anything more than a minor fortification.⁷⁷

The central question with regard to the *Burghal Hidage* and town formation is, of those sites intended to be towns, why did some become viable and why did others fail? The answer lies in the ability of each site to become economically self-sustaining. Those sites that did not become economically self-sustaining, or that were never intended to be towns, were abandoned after

⁷³ Hill, "Towns as Structures," 201-3.

⁷⁴ Tait, *The Medieval English Borough*, 26-7.

⁷⁵ Blackburn, "Mints, Burhs, and the Grately Code," 162-3.

⁷⁶ H. C. Darby, *Domesday England* (Cambridge, 1977), 297.

⁷⁷ David Hill, "Gazetteer of Burghal Hidage Sites," in D. Hill and A. R. Rumble (eds.), *The Defence of Wessex: The Burghal Hidage and Anglo-Saxon Fortifications* (1996), 189-231, at 195.

the viking threat had subsided, and those towns that already had, or which soon developed viable economies persisted down to the Norman Conquest.⁷⁸ Even beyond self-sustainability, there was the expectation that a town would turn a profit for the king and for regional elites. This is one of the main reasons that Alfred and his successors tried to restrict trade to towns. Using charter evidence for Worcester, Nicholas Brooks has shown that the establishment of a town was not just a military matter. As Brooks states, “it was also a financial carve-up between the king (or here the Ealdorman of the Mercians) and the interested great lords.”⁷⁹ Unfortunately, the type of evidence employed by Brooks is extremely rare; nonetheless, other indicators of the economic aspect of Alfred’s and his successors’ urban program can be found.

Another factor in a potential town’s long-term term viability was its geography and the history of its site. Overall, a *burh* site stood a better chance of persisting if it was founded on the site of a former Roman town. Eight of the thirty-three sites listed in the *Burghal Hidage* had some form of Roman antecedent; Bath, Chichester, Exeter, Portchester, Southampton, Southwark, Winchester, and Worcester.⁸⁰ Tellingly, all of these sites, except Portchester, survived to be recorded as boroughs in Domesday.⁸¹ This is in contrast to the fact that only fifteen of the other twenty-five, non-Roman sites survived until Domesday, and of these fifteen, most were merely vestiges of

⁷⁸ Hill, “Towns as Structures,” 221-32.

⁷⁹ Brooks, “The Administrative Background,” 143.

⁸⁰ Hill, “Gazetteer,” 189-231.

⁸¹ Hill, “Gazetteer,” 189-231.

their tenth-century incarnations. Having a Roman antecedent meant that the location of the town was, most likely, chosen by the Romans for its strategic position along the course of a river and, furthermore, that the Romans had built systems of roads radiating out from these settlements.⁸² Therefore, during the Roman period, the site had, at the very least, proven that it could successfully exploit its hinterland and had the advantage of the road system, which survived the fall, radiating out from these towns. Additionally, the viability rate of those settlements that had both a Roman antecedent and a mint was one hundred percent. There can be no question that the ghosts of Roman occupation influenced the development of the medieval towns of England.

Alfred's program cannot be discounted as simply a military undertaking; the evidence clearly indicates that he was trying to establish a sustainable system of defenses that relied, primarily, on a network of fortified towns in addition to smaller fortresses. Indeed, the replacement of the less desirable "temporary" fortresses with sites more conducive to the establishment of towns demonstrates that there was a preference on the part of Alfred and his successors to found multipurpose towns rather than simple fortresses. If the document that has come to be known as the *Burghal Hidage* proves anything, it proves that it is impossible to divorce economics from military and political organization in Anglo-Saxon England.

⁸² Peter Salway, "Geography and the Growth of Towns, with Special Reference to Britain," in F. Grew and B. Hobley (eds.), *Roman Urban Topography in Britain and the Western Empire*, Council for British Archaeology Research Report, 59 (1985), 67-73, at 71-3.

The decision by the ninth- and early tenth-century English authors and translators to use the same word—*burh*—to describe the West Saxon fortified settlements and so many long-established Continental, Middle Eastern, and African cities clearly indicates that they viewed the *burhs* as more than just military outposts. To these contemporaries the *burhs* were settlements that displayed, at least, some of the same characteristics as Rome, Constantinople, and Jerusalem.

4. Town Reeves and Royal Administration of Towns and Trade

The long-term history of towns in pre-Conquest England was one of adaptation, where the nature of those settlements best described as towns was shaped and reshaped by both internal and external forces. This history can be divided into three overarching phases: The *wic* or emporia phase, in which open trading centers developed and thrived along the coasts and rivers during the seventh, eighth, and early ninth centuries. The most prominent of these emporia— at Southampton, London, and York—were twinned with important ecclesiastical or royal centers of power. The *burh* phase was the period during which Alfred the Great and his successors founded a series of fortified towns throughout Wessex and Mercia in response to the viking threat of the late ninth and early tenth centuries. Lastly, the third phase is what we might term the fully-developed or *port* phase when a number of the *burhs* reached economic maturity during the tenth and eleventh centuries.

The involvement and influence of the early English kings in these towns also changed over time; beginning with their initial attempts to regulate and exploit the trade taking place in the emporia of the seventh, eighth, and early-ninth centuries and then expanding to the actual founding of the West-Saxon *burhs* in the late-ninth and tenth centuries. Finally, and in some ways coming

full-circle, the tenth- and eleventh-century kings of England became increasingly focused on controlling and profiting from the resurgence of regional and international trade taking place in towns. This general evolution of the towns of pre-conquest England and the involvement of kings in those towns can be charted by the Anglo-Saxon terms used to denote them— *wic*, *burh*, and *port*— and how and when those terms were also appended to the titles of the royal agents within those towns.

Just as they did with the other resources within their spheres of power, the kings of Anglo-Saxon England relied on royal officials known as reeves to enforce their will and extract their dues in the emergent towns of England. These town reeves, referred to chronologically as *wicgerefa*, *burhgerefa*, and *portgerefa*, acted as trade inspectors, toll takers, and tax collectors, and their existence is revealed in the various laws, charters, and literary texts produced during the four-hundred or so years between the founding of major emporia in the seventh century and the Norman Conquest.

To begin to understand the specialized nature of town reeves, we must briefly examine the word reeve, or *gerefa*, itself. James Campbell has defined the title reeve as “a pretty general sort of word, used for administrative agents at very different levels.”¹ This is a useful definition, one that captures the ambiguity of the title. While the word reeve appears in its root form most often, it also regularly appears preceded by a descriptive adjective or prefix such as king’s reeve, shire reeve, village reeve, hundred reeve and—germane to

¹ James Campbell, “Some Agents and Agencies of the Late Anglo-Saxon State,” in J. C. Holt (ed.), *Domesday Studies* (1987), 201-18, at 205.

this study—*wic* reeve, *burh* reeve, or *port* reeve. These qualifiers provide a geographical context that denotes the area over which the reeve had authority and in some instance the level of that authority. Although these men should not be mistaken for any sort of organized, professional corps of bureaucrats, reeves did represent the exercise of royal authority and the protection of royal interests on a local level.²

The first towns of pre-Conquest England, the major emporia or *wics* of the seventh to the ninth centuries evolved organically out of earlier, poly-focal, trade and craft-working settlements and were not, as was long hypothesized, *de novo* royal foundations.³ That said, it is apparent that the seventh- and eighth-century kings of England took an active interest in the trade taking place in the emporia and were employing local officials to oversee that trade and extract their take. The so called “Kentish laws” of Hlothere and Eadric state that “if any man of Kent purchases property in *Lundenwic* he should have two or three trustworthy men as witness or the king’s *wicgerefa*.”⁴ Here we have the first mention of a specialized town reeve, the *wicgerefa* or *wicreeve*, and an affirmation that the kings of Kent were claiming jurisdiction over the trade taking place in the emporium at London in the seventh century.

By the eighth century, the kings of Mercia were issuing remissions for the toll on ships taken at the emporium at London and the kings of Kent were

² Abels, *Alfred the Great*, 273.

³ Fleming, “Elites, Boats and Foreigners,” 17-26, Stoodley, “The Origins of Hamwic,” 318-30, Scull, “Ipswich: Development and Contexts,” 304-8, Spall, Toop, Briscoe, Hall, Mainman, Rowland and Vince, “Before Eoforwic: New Light on York in the 6th-7th Centuries,” at 8-20, McCormick, “Post-Roman Towns,” 47-61.

⁴ Hlothere and Eadric 16 in *GDA*, 11.

likewise issuing remissions for the tolls at Sarre and Fordwich.⁵ The bishops of London, Rochester, and Worcester, as well as the community at Minster-in-Thamet, all received remissions for the toll at London.⁶ These remissions tell us that that the regional and international trade taking place at the emporia was lucrative enough to spur the kings of England to impose tolls on it and that some ecclesiastics and religious communities were engaged in trade to such an extent that that there was a value in seeking toll-exemptions for their own ships. The mechanism for collecting those tolls was the first generation of royal, town reeves—the wicreeve.

The English kings exacting tolls on trading ships were likely influenced by the toll systems employed by their Merovingian and Carolingian contemporaries, which relied on royal agents at the Continental emporia of Quentovic and Dorestad.⁷ Susan Kelley has equated the *prefecti* addressed in several of toll remissions to the *wicgerefa* mention in the Kentish laws and to the *procuratores* who collected tolls at Quentovic and Dorestad.⁸ The Mercian and Kentish remissions, therefore, tell us that taking tolls was one of the major functions of the wicreeve. We can also surmise, based on the prelates' and abbot's desire for these remissions, that the wicreeve of London was a figure of sufficient authority to hold the men of bishops of London, Worcester, and Rochester to their toll obligations. The relative importance of these officials

⁵ Kelly, "Trading Privileges from Eighth-Century England," at 3-6, 11-3, Middleton, "Early Medieval Port Customs," at 331-4.

⁶ Kelly, "Trading Privileges from Eighth-Century England," at 3-6.

⁷ Kelly, "Trading Privileges from Eighth-Century England," at 17-26, Middleton, "Early Medieval Port Customs," at 317-51, McCormick, *Origins of the European Economy : Communications and Commerce, A.D. 300-900*, 640-7.

⁸ Kelly, "Trading Privileges from Eighth-Century England," at 18-20.

may be indicated by the property held by one probable wicreeve of London. Susan Kelly has argued that the *prefectus* Ceolmund named as the prior holder of a *haga* in London granted by Burgred of Mercia to the Alhhun Bishop of Worcester in 857 may have been the wicreeve of London.⁹

Considering the obvious benefit that having a wicreeve to enforce the tolls at London provided to the kings of Kent and then Mercia, we can conclude that there must also have been wicreeves or similar royal officials who looked to the local kings' interests and collected their tolls and taxes in the other great emporia at Southampton, Ipswich, and York. It is hard to imagine that the large populations of these towns, numbering well into the thousands, would have been allowed to live, work, and accumulate wealth without making some sort of regular payment to the kings who claimed dominion over those regions.¹⁰

With regard to the emporia at Southampton, we know from their law codes that the kings of Wessex were concerned with the conduct of trade in the seventh, eighth, and ninth centuries. In Alfred's *Domboc* it states that any trader who brings men into the country must present them to the king's reeve at a public ceremony.¹¹ This law appears to be clarifying or amending an earlier edict of Ine, which is also transmitted in the *Domboc*, which states that traders who make their way into the country must trade before witnesses.¹²

⁹ Kelly, "Trading Privileges from Eighth-Century England," at 12.

¹⁰ Andrews, *Excavations at Hamwic: Volume 2 Excavations at Six Dials*, 252, Cowie, Kemp, Morton and Wade, "Gazetteer of Known English Wics," 97, Tweddle, Moulden and Logan, *Anglian York*, 93.

¹¹ Alfred 34, *GDA*, 68.

¹² Ine 25, *GDA*, 100.

These laws show an effort by the West Saxon kings to exercise some level of control over foreign traders selling their wares within their territories and the use of royal reeves as a means to that end.

The extent numismatic and ceramic evidence indicates that the emporium at Southampton, *Hamwic*, was likely the main *entrepot* for foreign traders entering Wessex prior to Alfred the Great's acquisition of London. An analysis of the distribution of early eighth-century coin finds shows that Continental *sceattas* entering Wessex were concentrated at *Hamwic* and radiated outward from the emporium.¹³ The pottery recovered from *Hamwic* also demonstrates ties to the Continent that were not shared by contemporary settlements in *Hamwic's* rural hinterland. Sherds from Continental pots and domestic pots that mimicked Continental styles are common at *Hamwic* but quite rare at contemporary rural sites.¹⁴ The production of local pottery inspired by Continental types indicates that some inhabitants of *Hamwic* had such regular contact with foreigners that they adopted their tastes and cooking practices.¹⁵

The earliest extant indication of royal interest in York is Bede's account of the baptism of Edwin and founding of the Minster in 627.¹⁶ The subsequent construction of the stone Minster coupled with the development of the emporium at Fishergate in the later seventh century must have made York a place that was both religiously and economically significant to the kings of

¹³ Metcalf, "Variations in the Composition of Currency," 39-47.

¹⁴ Jervis, "A Patchwork of People, Pots and Places," at 248-62.

¹⁵ Jervis, "A Patchwork of People, Pots and Places," at 252, 6-9.

¹⁶ Bede, *HE*, 186,92.

Northumbria. The advent of the minting of silver coins at York in the seventh century is an indication of its growing political and economic importance.¹⁷ Cecily Spall and Nicola Toop have argued that “the numismatic evidence from York may reflect a link between economic intensification and the new royally patronized ecclesiastical power.”¹⁸ Moreover, the distribution of eighth-century coin finds in Yorkshire indicates that a system of markets and tolls may have existed along the main routes from the Northumbrian coast to York.¹⁹ Considering its regional prominence, York must have had an official or officials who answered directly to the king, or perhaps to the bishop, who could collect these tolls.

The evidence from Southampton, London, and York points to an environment where the seventh- to ninth-century kings of England were claiming jurisdiction over trade taking place at the emporia and adapting existing mechanisms of royal power to extract revenues from it. The kings of early England were not the sole progenitors of this trade as was once thought, but they were more than capable of promoting it and exploiting it for their own benefit.²⁰ By appointing wicreeves and empowering them to collect tolls at the emporia, the kings of early England were trying to ensure that they shared in the new-found profits that savvy elites were enjoying from marketing the surplus of their rural estates at the emporia.

¹⁷ Elizabeth Pirie, "Contrasts and Continuity within the Coinage of Northumbria, C. 670-867," in B. Cook and G. Williams (eds.), *Coinage and History of the North Sea World C. 500-1250* (2006), 211-40, at 213-4.

¹⁸ Spall, Toop, Briscoe, Hall, Mainman, Rowland and Vince, "Before Eoforwic: New Light on York in the 6th-7th Centuries," at 19.

¹⁹ Naylor, "The Circulation of Early-Medieval European Coinage," at 9-60.

²⁰ Moreland, "The Significance of Production in Eighth-Century England," 102.

Finally, we know that the kings of Wessex did indeed appoint wicreeves, as the single pre-conquest individual who we can definitively identify as holding the title *wicgerefa* is Beornwulf the wicreeve of Winchester.²¹ Beornwulf is mentioned in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* entry for 897 as being one of the “best of the king’s *thegns*” who died during the three years of pestilence.²² What is interesting is that we have no other record of Winchester being characterized as a *wic*. Beornwulf’s title may have been bestowed upon him due to the presence of minting in Winchester or perhaps based on the settlement’s relationship to Southampton.²³ Beornwulf may also represent a transitional figure who held an old-fashion title that was going out of use when he died. We know that Winchester was considered a *burh* by the time of Beornwulf’s death, as it is listed on the *Burhgal Hidage* and its population is referred to as *burhwaru* in a late ninth-century charter of Bishop Æthelwold.²⁴

The second iteration of a specialized townreeve, the *burhgerefa* or burhreeve, first appears in the textual sources in the ninth century just as the word *burh* began to be applied more commonly to the new walled-towns of Wessex and Mercia.²⁵ In the late ninth century, Alfred the Great began a large-scale program of town foundation and restoration that combined the economic functions of the former emporia with administrative and military functions

²¹ ASC (a), s.a. 897.

²² ASC (a), s.a. 897.

²³ Michael Metcalf, “The First Series of Sceattas Minted in Southern Wessex: Series W,” *British Numismatic Journal*, 75 (2005), 1-17, at 9-11.

²⁴ S1376.

²⁵ See Chapter 3, 82-90.

within a fortified enclosure.²⁶ This program appears to have been inspired by the small-scale fortress building projects undertaken by Alfred's West-Saxon and Mercian predecessors, Carolingian examples such as the Pont de L'Arche, and the fortification of the Leonine city at Rome.²⁷ Alfred must also have drawn inspiration from what remained of the Roman cities in Britain and from classical texts such as *Orosius* and *Boethius* which were well known at his court.²⁸

The products of this program can be found in the so-called *Burghal Hidage*, a list of thirty-three fortified sites founded or restored by Alfred and his successors coupled with the number of hides assigned to each site for the maintenance of its fortifications.²⁹ Although not every site listed in the *Burghal Hidage* was intended to be a town or developed into a full-fledged town, it provides insight into how the West Saxon system of walled towns and fortresses was to be maintained. Nicholas Brooks has argued that Alfred built upon the preexisting West-Saxon system of ealdormen and reeves to administer his kingdom at the local level and that the system of shire defenses outlined in the *Burghal Hidage* would have been ultimately overseen by the ealdormen.³⁰

Although the ealdormen certainly had a vested interest in and authority over the *burhs*, we cannot expect that the day-to-day administration of these soon-to-be towns would have fallen to men of such elevated status. The

²⁶ Hill, "Towns as Structures," 200-8.

²⁷ Hill, "The Origins of Alfred's Urban Policies," 220-8.

²⁸ See Table 3.1.

²⁹ Rumble, "The Known Manuscripts," 39.

³⁰ Nicholas Brooks, "Alfredian Government: The West Saxon Inheritance," in T. Reuter (ed.), *Alfred the Great: Papers from the Eleventh-Century Conferences*, Studies in Early Medieval Britain, 3 (2003), 153-73, at 157-9.

ealdormen must have relied on royal reeves in the *burhs* to act as the overseers of the settlements. This would have been analogous to king's reeves who oversaw the royal estates or the earlier wicreeves who looked to the king's interests in the emporia.³¹ Considering the complexity of their military organization, the new *burhs* of Wessex and Mercia must have had local, royally appointed officials overseeing the system of the wall-work outlined in the *Burghal Hidage*. As part of the program of *burh* construction, Alfred and his successors also expanded the network of mints in Wessex and Mercia by allowing each *burh* the option of having a mint and this increase in the number of mints, combined with a series of coinage reforms and recoinages, presented new opportunities for the West-Saxon kings to profit from minting.³² The duties of the burhreeves must have included keeping a watchful eye on the moneyers who held the franchises for minting at these new settlements and making sure that the king received his take from the exchange of currency there.³³

Archaeological evidence from several of the *burhs* supports the contention that they were intended to be towns from their inception and would, therefore, have been subject to the same sort of royal burdens as the emporia. Recent excavations in Winchester at Staple Gardens and Tower Street have revealed evidence for secular occupation and craft production

³¹ Campbell, "Some Agents and Agencies of the Late Anglo-Saxon State," 205-9, Faith, *The English Peasantry and the Growth of Lordship*, 75.

³² Mark Blackburn, "Alfred's Coinage Reforms in Context," in T. Reuter (ed.), *Alfred the Great: Papers from the Eleventh-Centenary Conferences*, Studies in Early Medieval Britain, 3 (2003), 199-218, at 207-8.

³³ Rory Naismith, *Money and Power in Anglo-Saxon England: The Southern English Kingdoms, 757-865* (Cambridge ; New York, 2011), 41-6.

dating from the mid-ninth century.³⁴ This adds weight to the argument for Winchester having been organized as a town from its restoration in the ninth century.³⁵ The excavations at Deansway, Worcester reveal that the area within the *burh* defenses was occupied in the tenth centuries not by elites or a garrison but by “artisans engaged in more mundane occupations and producing goods for everyday use.”³⁶ This evidence would seem to contradict the hypothesis that Worcester was solely an aristocratic military and ecclesiastical enclave in the tenth century and points to a far more diverse spectrum of inhabitants and activities.³⁷ There is also evidence for reoccupation from several sites in London that show secular occupation, craft working, and trade within the walls beginning in the late ninth century.³⁸ Again, it is not unreasonable to expect that the craftsmen and traders of ninth-century Winchester, Worcester, and London would have been answerable to a local reeve acting on behalf of the king.

Officials identified as burhreeves can be found as prominent actors in the *Old English Martyrology*, a ninth-century collection of more than two-hundred prose entries arranged according to the liturgical calendar, which

³⁴ Ben Ford and Steven Teague, *Winchester a City in the Making: Archaeological Excavations between 2002 and 2007 on the Sites of Northgate House, Staple Gardens and the Former Winchester Library, Jewry St* (Oxford, 2011), 200-9.

³⁵ Martin Biddle and Derek Keene, “The Late Saxon Burh,” in M. Biddle (ed.), *Winchester in the Middle Ages: An Edition and Discussion of the Winton Domesday*, Winchester Studies (1976), 449-69, at 449-51.

³⁶ Hal Dalwood, Rachel Edwards and Nigel Blades, *Excavations at Deansway, Worcester, 1988-89: Romano-British Small Town to Late Medieval City* (York, 2004), 60.

³⁷ Holt, “The Urban Transformation in England,” at 65-78.

³⁸ Mark Burch, Phil Treveil and Derek Keene, *The Development of Early Medieval and Later Poultry and Cheapside: Excavations at 1 Poultry and Vicinity, City of London* (London, 2011), 20-2, 170-2,, David Bowsher, *The London Guildhall: An Archaeological History of a Neighbourhood from Early Medieval to Modern Times* (London, 2007), 300.

primarily commemorate the lives of martyred saints on their feast days.³⁹ Each entry has the date of the feast, the name of the saint and some narrative detail about the saint's life and most often about their martyrdom. Just as *burh* was the correct term for a town for the translator of the *Old English Orosius*, for the compiler of the *Old English Martyrology* the appropriate Anglo-Saxon term for an imperial or royal official who dispensed justice within a town was *burhgerefa* or some derivation thereof.⁴⁰

Throughout the *Old English Martyrology*, it is the burhreeves who enforce the imperial laws in Rome and royal laws in the other towns of the ancient world and who, in most instances, persecute the martyrs.⁴¹ The compound word *burhgerefa* appears in the text twice, in the entries for St. Agnes and St. Timothy.⁴² In two other entries, for the Forty Soldiers and St. Felix of Thibiuca, the word *gerefa* is immediately preceded by the adjective *burge*.⁴³ The most common form of *Burhgerefa* to appear in the *Old English Martyrology* is, as Jane Roberts has noted, *Romeburge gerefa*, which appears in nine entries.⁴⁴

There is little reason to doubt the vocabulary of the *Old English Martyrology* or the translation of its sources. The *Old English Martyrology* appears to have been derived from a number of Latin sources by a single

³⁹ Günter Kotzor, *Das Altenglische Martyrologium* (München, 1981), 3-36, 175-302, Christine Rauer, "The Sources of the Old English Martyrology," *Anglo-Saxon England*, 32 (2003), 89-109, at 89-102.

⁴⁰ See Chapter 3, 82-90.

⁴¹ See Appendix D.

⁴² All entries will be denoted using the numbering in Günter Kotzor, *Das Altenglische Martyrologium* (München, 1981), 1-266. Hereafter OEM. 161.

⁴³ Kotzor, OEM, 41, 170.

⁴⁴ Roberts, "*Fela Martyra* 'Many Martyrs': A Different View of Orosius's City," 158.

compiler who is commonly referred to as the as the martyrologist.⁴⁵ The sources for the *Old English Martyrology* represent a wide array of Latin works including Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica* and Adamnan's *De Locis Sanctis*.⁴⁶ It seems unlikely that the martyrologist would have been imprecise or inaccurate in his translation of these respected sources. As Christine Rauer states, "the martyrologist seems to have made unusually careful and faithful use of his narrative sources and few insertions of unrelated ornamental matter have been detected."⁴⁷ Moreover, it appears, based on an extent eleventh-century Latin-Old English glossary, that he was employing a common translation for the Latin word *prefectus*.⁴⁸

Over and over again in the text of the *Old English Martyrology*, we find the antagonistic Roman prefects described as a burhreeves. In the December 25th entry for St. Eugenia, it was Nicetius the burhreeve of Rome, *Romeburge gerefa*, who had her cast into the Tiber, then pushed into an oven, and, when both of those efforts failed, finally had the saint imprisoned.⁴⁹ It was the same Nicetius who also had St. Eugenia's servants, Sts. Protus and Hyacinth, beheaded for refusing to pray to a statue of Mars and for destroying the pagan Idol with their prayers to God.⁵⁰ In the January 21st entry for St. Agnes, the malefactor who tried to force her to marry his son and, upon her refusal, had

⁴⁵ Rauer, "The Sources of the Old English Martyrology," at 89-93.

⁴⁶ Günter Kotzor, "The Latin Tradition of Martyrologies and the Old English Martyrology," in P. Szarmach (ed.), *Studies in Earlier Old English Prose* (1986), 301-33, at 310.

⁴⁷ Rauer, "The Sources of the Old English Martyrology," at 92.

⁴⁸ L Kindschi, *The Latin-Old English Glossaries in Plantin-Moretus Ms. 32 and British Museum Ms. Additional 32246* 1955), 42-105.

⁴⁹ Kotzor, *OEM*, 3.

⁵⁰ Kotzor, *OEM*, 182.

the saint led naked into a brothel, was referred to specifically as the *burhgerefa* of Rome.⁵¹ There is no reason to suspect that the martyrologist would have invented the title *burhgerefa* out of whole cloth. It is much more likely that the martyrologist and his brethren would have been familiar with the *burhgerefa* who enforced the king's laws and protected his interests at Winchester, London, Worcester and other West-Saxon and Mercian towns.

According to the *Martyrology*, it was another burhreeve of Rome, Tarquinius, who tried to force Pope Sylvester I to accept paganism and had the saint imprisoned.⁵² Unfortunately for Tarquinius, his zeal for his duties resulted in the saint cursing him, ultimately resulting in the reeve's death.⁵³ In the April 14 entry for Sts. Valerianus and Tiburtius, it is again the burhreeve of Rome who orders them beheaded.⁵⁴ It was the burhreeve of Rome, Flaccus, whose demand that St. Petrinella marry him led her to pray for her own death.⁵⁵ In the June 25 entry for St. Lucia, it was the burhreeve of Rome who had the saint and her patron Auceia beheaded.⁵⁶ In the August 22nd entry for St. Timothy, he was beheaded by the *buhgerefan* Tarquinius who later suffered a "shameful death."⁵⁷ The repetition with which some form of the term *burhgerefa* is used in the *Old English Martyrology* indicates that the term would have been commonly understood by the martyrologist's audience. It also begs the question of whether or not the martyrologist and his monastic

⁵¹ Kotzor, *OEM*, 30.

⁵² Kotzor, *OEM*, 7.

⁵³ Kotzor, *OEM*, 7.

⁵⁴ Kotzor, *OEM*, 64.

⁵⁵ Kotzor, *OEM*, 94.

⁵⁶ Kotzor, *OEM*, 112.

⁵⁷ *arlease deaðe*. Kotzor, *OEM*, 161.

brethren might not have found some allusion to their own conflicts with royal officials in the stories of the martyrs.

Not all of the burhreeves of Rome were villains in the *Old English Martyrology*, however, one was a martyr himself—St. Hermes. According to his August 28 entry, his son was deathly ill and despite Hermes' and his wife's prayers to all of the idols of Rome, the boy died.⁵⁸ The boy's foster mother then brought his body to Pope Alexander who raised him from the dead. In response to the Pope's miraculous intervention, Hermes and all 1,052 of his newly-freed slaves accepted baptism, an act for which he was later executed by the emperor.⁵⁹ The inclusion of St. Hermes in the *Old English Martyrology* at the very least shows some hope of redemption for those burhreeves who recognized the righteousness of the Church.

To return for a moment to the role of the ealdormen in the administration of the *burhs* and their relationship to the burhreeves, in the August 2nd entry for St. Theodota, the villain, Nicius, is described the *burge ealdorman* of Nicaea.⁶⁰ This seems to indicate when the martyrologist was translating and compiling this entry he noticed something different about this Nicius, perhaps the Latin term used for his title, that required him to have a marker of elevated status and he therefore he described him as the ealdorman of the *burh*. This would indicate that there was a connection between the ealdormen and the *burhs*, but that relationship was somehow different and at a higher level than that of the burhreeves.

⁵⁸ Kotzor, *OEM*, 166.

⁵⁹ Kotzor, *OEM*, 166.

⁶⁰ Kotzor, *OEM*, 144.

It is interesting that the term *burgerefa* does not appear in any extant Anglo-Saxon charters. It may be a product of the use of Latin for diplomas in the late ninth and early tenth centuries. The *burhgerefa* of this period may simply be lost amongst the many *prefecti* and *ministiri* of the witness lists of the period. It may also be a product of the randomness of survival. In discussing the “paucity” of charters from this period, Simon Keynes has noted “that for various reasons fewer charters were produced in Alfred’s reign, and that other factors conspired to reduce almost to nothing the chance that any would be preserved.”⁶¹ We should not, therefore, take the absence of the Anglo-Saxon title *burgerefa* from the charters of this period as any kind of indication that the title was not in common use for at least a short period of time.

More likely, the title *burhgerefa* represented a transitional step between the *wicgerefa* and a later, more specialized, town reeve that appears in the historical record of England, for the ninth, tenth, and eleventh centuries—the *portgerefa* or portreeve.⁶² The office of the portreeve was an instrument of royal attempts to control and exploit the growing regional and overseas trade of the tenth and eleventh centuries. These men, such as Ulf the Portreeve of London and Ælfword of Exeter, were the human agents of a larger transformation in the geography and administration of trade in late Anglo-

⁶¹ Simon Keynes, “The Power of the Written Word: Alfredian England 871-899,” in T. Reuter (ed.), *Alfred the Great: Papers from the Eleventh-Centenary Conferences*, 3 (2003), 175-97, at 191.

⁶² The following section of this chapter is based upon: David Crane, “The Port Reeve and Royal Control of Overseas Trade in Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Norman England”, presented at 39th International Conference on Medieval Studies (Kalamazoo, Michigan, 2004), 1-12.

Saxon England. The emergence of their office and their role, as defined by the legal customs governing trade, were all part and parcel of royal attempts to transfer the conduct of overseas trade out of open areas, such as *wics* and into the emerging walled-towns of late Anglo-Saxon England, which were referred to as *burhs*.

With the risk of stating the obvious, the portreeve's function was that of the reeve of a *port* and the word *port* itself was beginning to take on the specialized legal meaning, in the ninth and tenth centuries, as a place where trade was conducted, or perhaps more precisely of the place where trade *should* be conducted.⁶³ The laws of Edward the Elder spell out that all trade was to be conducted in a *port* and should be witnessed by the portreeve.⁶⁴ This links the office of the portreeve with those towns that were regularly becoming the location of trade and with the king's interests therein.

The appearance of the *port* prefix stands as a morphological evolution from the *wic* and *burh* prefixes. This change in language was parallel to actual physical movement of trade from *wics* into *burhs* and more specifically to those towns that came to be known as *ports*. Stephane Lebecq and Alban Gautier have argued that the old trade network of the emporia, disrupted by the viking activities of the ninth century, were replaced by "new exchange networks based on a new generation of ports and brought to life by a new generation of

⁶³ For more on the meaning of port see: Janet Bately, "The Language of Othere's Report to King Alfred," in S. Keynes and A. P. Smyth (eds.), *Anglo-Saxons: Studies Presented to Cyril Roy Hart* (2006), 39-55, at 47-55.

⁶⁴ I Edward 1, *GDA*, 138.

tradesmen” during the tenth century.⁶⁵ This new network was based upon a reorientation of trade to fortified sites on the Continent and in England that were better equipped to deal with the viking threat than the undefended emporia.⁶⁶ On the Continent, Tiel replaced Dorestad and Montreuil-sur-Mer developed in the vicinity of Quentovic; in England, Southampton replaced Hamwic and the commerce of Lundenwic reemerged inside the restored Roman walls of London.⁶⁷ This reorientation of trade synchronizes perfectly with the evolution of English towns, the efforts of the English kings to profit from the trade taking place in them, and the development of the office of the reeves who oversaw both the towns and their traders.

As we have seen, when one examines the so-called Anglo-Saxon law codes, a pattern of increasing royal interest in trade becomes apparent. It begins with the simple regulations on trading in front of witnesses and progresses to restrictions tying trade to particular locals, that is, *ports*; and putting trade under the supervision of particular officials, that is, portreeves. The laws of Ine simply state that trade was to be conducted in front of witnesses.⁶⁸ Alfred’s laws go further and state that any trader who brings men into the country must present them to the king’s reeve at a public ceremony.⁶⁹ While Alfred’s law only mentions the king’s reeve generically, and it does not

⁶⁵ Stephane Lebecq and Alban Gautier, "Routeways between England and the Continent in the Tenth Century," in D. W. Rollason, C. Leyser and H. Williams (eds.), *England and the Continent in the Tenth Century: Studies in Honour of Wilhelm Levison (1876-1947)* (2011), 17-34, at 18.

⁶⁶ Lebecq and Gautier, "Routeways between England and the Continent in the Tenth Century," 20-3.

⁶⁷ Lebecq and Gautier, "Routeways between England and the Continent in the Tenth Century," 22-30.

⁶⁸ Ine 25, *GDA*, 100.

⁶⁹ Alfred 34, *GDA*, 68.

mention town reeves specifically, it establishes a royal interest in controlling and overseeing trade and the use of local officials to do so.

The aforementioned laws of Edward the Elder are even more direct than those of his predecessors on the appropriate place in which to conduct trade. Trade was to be conducted in a *port* and witnessed by the portreeve or other trustworthy men.⁷⁰ The penalty for breaking this law was the same as that for insubordination to the king.⁷¹ Æthelstan reiterates this statement in his laws, with the amendment that it applied only to goods over 20d.⁷² This 20 pence bar would support what Michael Metcalf and others have seen in the numismatic evidence, that there was a monetized regional trade that was taking place at smaller trading centers outside of royal control.⁷³ This may actually represent an acknowledgement that trying to control such small-scale trade was not a worthwhile endeavor.

There is an edict on trade in the laws of Edmund, similar to and most likely derived from Edward's and Athelstan's. The code, issued at Colyton, contains an interesting transliteration in the twelfth-century Latin in which it has been transmitted.⁷⁴ It uses the word *portirevae*, a latinization of the Anglo-Saxon *portgerefa*. What has come to be known as IV Æthelred, which lists the tolls of Billingsgate, also uses the *portirevae* term in its clause on the process of clearing oneself of the accusation of withholding the toll levied by a

⁷⁰ I Edward 1 *GDA*, 138.

⁷¹ II Edward 2, *GDA*, 142.

⁷² II Æthelstan 12, *GDA*, 156.

⁷³ Metcalf, "Variations in the Composition of Currency," 37-47.

⁷⁴ For more on the transmission of law codes see Patrick Wormald, *The Making of English Law: King Alfred to the Twelfth Century* (Oxford, 1999), 308-12.

royal official.⁷⁵ Since this is clearly the portreeve, we can conclude that the portreeve was instrumental in overseeing and securing the collection of the tolls of the *port* during the period when the original text was composed.⁷⁶ This ties the role of the portreeve directly to that of the wicreeve of the earlier emporia.

There is charter evidence that indicates that London, Canterbury, and Exeter all had portreeves.⁷⁷ There are explicit references to Canterbury's portreeve in the witness lists of two late tenth/early eleventh century charters. The first is the settlement of a lawsuit concerning the estate of Snodland, in Kent. Æthelred the portreeve of the *byrge* is listed as a witness along with Archbishop Ælfric, Bishop Godwine, Leofric the *scireman*, the Abbot of Christchurch, as well as several others.⁷⁸ The second is a charter that details the purchase of an estate at Offham, in Kent.⁷⁹ The inclusion of portreeves in the witness list of these charters is not overly remarkable on its face, since reeves regularly appear in witness lists, but it is notable because they are distinctly identified as portreeves. In each case they are referred to as *portgerefa* rather than as simply the reeve or the king's reeve. Indeed, in the second charter Godric the portreeve is listed before Wulfsige the king's reeve.⁸⁰ Based on the hierarchical nature of witness lists this indicates that there was a clear differentiation between the king's reeve and the portreeve

⁷⁵ IV Æthelred 3, *GDA*, 234.

⁷⁶ See Wormald, *The Making of English Law: King Alfred to the Twelfth Century*, 320-30.

⁷⁷ All Charters will be noted using the numbering in *S*, ed. Sawyer, hereafter abbreviated *S*.

⁷⁸ *S*1456.

⁷⁹ *S*1473.

⁸⁰ *S*1473.

and that the portreeve, at least in this case, took precedence over the king's reeve.

More about the status of some portreeves can be determined from two writs of Edward, the Confessor. These indicate that London had two portreeves for at least part of the eleventh century, and that they were clearly men of stature in the town.⁸¹ Even more revealing about the status of London's portreeves is the writ of Edward, which confirms the grant of land and a wharf made to Westminster by Ulf the portreeve and his wife Cynegyth.⁸² That Ulf was of sufficient wealth and standing to donate land and a wharf to Westminster is a clear indication that he was a fairly high-status individual. The holding of a wharf is also a strong indication of the portreeve's connection to overseas trade. Ulf must have been a significant official to be able to bequeath a wharf in the largest trading center in England.

Portreeves also appear in the text of a number of tenth- and eleventh-century manumissions from Exeter, Bodmin, and Bath.⁸³ In several instances the portreeve is listed as taking the toll for the "king's hand."⁸⁴ These manumissions show the portreeve acting as the king's agent and witness.⁸⁵ The toll taken on manumission was for the king as his due for what was considered the final sale of the slave.⁸⁶ It is important to remember that it was

⁸¹ S1149. S1150.

⁸² S1119.

⁸³ the manumissions will be listed using the numbering of the Royal Historical Society to be found at <http://www.trin.cam.ac.uk/chartwww/manumit.html>

⁸⁴ M3.

⁸⁵ M3, M5, M9.

⁸⁶ David Pelteret, *Slavery in Early Mediaeval England: From the Reign of Alfred until the Twelfth Century* (Woodbridge, 1995), 155, 6.

only the desire to document the act of manumission itself which created a distinct record of the transaction. It is likely that the numerous manumissions contained in late Anglo-Saxon wills would have been similarly witnessed by portreeves. What must also be considered is the indefinable number of less significant transactions that must have occurred on a regular basis but did not merit the trouble of a text. If we take only the evidence for the tolls at Billingsgate we can see a wide variety of goods from which Anglo-Saxon kings required a piece of the sale; planks, cloth, fish, wine, wool, and pepper.⁸⁷ And in order for the king to get his share from each of these transactions, there needed to be a portreeve overseeing these transactions.

From just the preceding law code and charter evidence we can begin to piece together a profile of a portreeve that is one of an official who was directly responsible for the witnessing of trade, the collection of tolls, and the witnessing of manumissions. There is also some interesting literary evidence, which further defines the role of the portreeve in the anonymous, eleventh-century, Old-English version of *The Seven Sleepers of Ephesus*.⁸⁸ The story tells the tale of seven young Christian men in the city of Ephesus, who hide in a cave above the city to avoid the wrath of the pagan emperor Decius. The Emperor discovers their whereabouts and has the sleepers walled up in the cave. Rather than perishing, the men are preserved by a miraculous sleep, which overtakes them. After five hundred years the sleepers are awakened and discover that the wall has been removed. One of the sleepers, Malchus,

⁸⁷ IV Æthelred 2, *GDA*, 232.

⁸⁸ *The Anonymous Old English Legend of the Seven Sleepers*, ed. Hugh Magennis, (Durham, 1994), 1.

then ventures into the city in order to buy food for the group. As Malchus enters the city, he is amazed to see Christian symbols on the gates; however, he still does not realize the amount of time that has passed. Malchus purchases bread from a baker who is startled by the ancient coins that the sleeper has given him, and this man then reports to the authorities what has transpired. The imperial official in charge of the town and the bishop then interrogates Malchus, believing that he has discovered an ancient treasure and is withholding it from the city. The official examines Malchus' coins and questions him as to their origin. It is during this interrogation that the story of the sleepers is revealed; and Malchus learns that he and his companions have been asleep for centuries only to awaken in a city that had become subject to a Christian emperor.⁸⁹

In translating the story from the Latin, the author chose to use the word *portgerefa* to describe the imperial official in charge of the town.⁹⁰ This choice indicates that the author believed that the appropriate title for the royal official of a town who had control over trade, coinage, found treasure, and keeping the peace was the *portgerefa*. This corresponds directly to the entry in Ælfric's Latin Grammar, which couples *portgerefa* with the Latin *praefecti urbis* when explaining declensions.⁹¹ For both Ælfric and the scribes of the Legend of the Seven Sleepers the common term for the royal overseer of a town was *portgerefa*.

⁸⁹ *The Anonymous Old English Legend of the Seven Sleepers*, ed. Magennis, 1.

⁹⁰ *The Anonymous Old English Legend of the Seven Sleepers*, ed. Magennis, 1.

⁹¹ Ælfric, *Grammatica Latino-Saxonica Cum Glossario*, ed. J. Zupitza and H. Gneuss (Berlin, 1966), 88.

Catherine Cubitt has also utilized the Old-English version of *The Seven Sleepers* to argue that portreeves and royal reeves in general had working knowledge of the lawbooks of Anglo-Saxon England and also acted in a judicial capacity in the towns late Anglo-Saxon England.⁹² This knowledge of the laws was put to practical use as portreeves also ruled on criminal matters in the towns where they served.⁹³ This interpretation of the portreeve as an agent of royal justice is, as Cubitt notes, completely compatible with his oversight of trade and further enhances his overall authority in the town.⁹⁴

It is also during this period that we see a dramatic change in the minting practices of the Anglo-Saxon kings and of legislation concerning the control of the monetary economy. Just after the edicts on trade, Æthelstan's second code establishes that there should be a unified currency and that all minting was to be performed in a *port*.⁹⁵ This indicates that a level of understanding regarding the intricacies of a monetized economy existed among those who had influence upon royal legislation, and that there was an overt attempt to affect that economy. Indeed, Pamela Nightingale has made a strong argument for the importance of Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Scandinavian coinage and weight standards on the continent in the tenth and eleventh centuries, and has demonstrated that the kings were cognizant of these factors in their monetary

⁹² Catherine Cubitt, "'As the Lawbook Teaches': Reeves, Lawbooks and Urban Life in the Anonymous Old English Legend of the Seven Sleepers," *English Historical Review*, CXXIV (2009), 1021-49, at 1031-35.

⁹³ Cubitt, "'As the Lawbook Teaches'," at 1029-37.

⁹⁴ Cubitt, "'As the Lawbook Teaches'," at 1037-40.

⁹⁵ II Æthelstan 14, *GDA*, 158.

policies.⁹⁶ This legislation creates a context where, in the minds of the author of the Seven Sleepers, the inspection of the coins would logically be performed by the king's official in a *port*, the portreeve. Indeed, returning to the laws of Æthelred, they state that any portreeve conspiring with a moneyer to produce debased currency should pay the same penalty of loss of life or limb.⁹⁷

All of this evidence indicates is that the office of the portreeve was created to protect the king's interest in trade and to insure that it was transacted according to the law. The reorientation of trade from open sites to fortified sites called for the invention of a new official, or at the very least the evolution of an old one, to try to enforce royal policy in this regard. Evolved from the earlier *wicgerefa* and *burhgerefa*, the *portgerefa* was the agent of the king in the new urban arena of trade—the port. In collecting tolls, witnessing trade, and insuring the value of currency, the office of portreeve in late Anglo-Saxon England was intended enforce the king's law on merchants, moneyers and townsmen alike. In simple terms, what the office of the portreeve represents is the attempt by the kings of Anglo-Saxon England to exert authority over trade and over those towns specializing in trade. The creation of this office coupled with the establishment of the laws from which it derived its authority, clearly demonstrate a cognizance of a commercializing economy by the kings of late Anglo-Saxon England and the will to try to control and exploit that economy.

⁹⁶ Pamela Nightingale, "The Evolution of Weight-Standards and the Creation of New Monetary and Commercial Links in Northern Europe from the Tenth Century to the Twelfth Century," *Economic History Review*, 38 (1985), 192-209, at 192.

⁹⁷ IV Æthelred 7, *GDA*, 236.

The office of portreeve seems to have even persisted for brief moment after the conquest, when William I issued his first charter to the *burgwaru* of London, he addresses them along with Gosfreð the *Portgerefa*.⁹⁸ We know from later sources that Gosfreð was Geoffrey de Mandeville, sheriff of Essex.⁹⁹ This address appears, however, to have been but a postscript to an era, much like the appearance of the Wicreeve Beornwulf in the *Chronicle* at the very moment when momentous change was consigning his title to the pages of history.

⁹⁸ Charter of William I to London, 180 in *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum: The Acta of William I, 1066-1087*, ed. D. Bates (Oxford, 1998), 593.

⁹⁹ Campbell, "Large Towns," 59, 66.

5. Rebuilding Rome: Churches and Religious Houses in the Anglo-Saxon Town

Churches and religious houses are often the earliest and most prominent features recognizable in the archaeological and textual record of the towns of Anglo-Saxon England and as such we know they were critical elements in the development of those towns. Indeed, many of these churches, such as Christchurch in Canterbury, St. Paul's in London, and Old and New Minster in Winchester were—and still are in their current incarnations—monumental structures that defined both the physical and ideological landscape of their towns.

In those towns that were founded or refounded as part of the West Saxon system of *burhs*, the prominence of preexisting or newly founded churches and religious houses can be attributed, in large part, to the attempts of two powerful institutions to recreate what they imagined was the ideal of a city or town: The first attempt was in the sixth and seventh centuries when the new, “Roman” bishops of England chose the former Roman towns of Britain as the appropriate locations for their cathedral churches. The second attempt was when Alfred the Great and his heirs founded the *burhs* and chose to maintain many of the existing churches and religious houses at those sites or, more often, to found new churches and religious communities to promote the

material and symbolic transformation of their *burhs* into full-fledged, Roman- or Continental-style towns.

No exploration of the role of the Church or, perhaps, more accurately churches in the development of the towns of Anglo-Saxon England can proceed without first addressing what stands as the maximal view of their contributions—John Blair’s “Minster Hypothesis.” In his *Church in Anglo-Saxon Society*, Blair presents his so-called “Minster Hypothesis,” in which he argues that the cornerstone upon which every Anglo-Saxon town, or *burh*, was built was an Anglo-Saxon monastery, a *mynster*.¹ At the heart of his “Minster Hypothesis” is Blair’s statement that “not only did minsters look more like towns than any other kind of pre-Viking settlement; they also showed a strong tendency to become real towns as the economy developed between the ninth and tenth centuries.”² Furthermore, Blair cites “comparative studies” that focus on the role of “ritual centres” as the precursors to “cities” in Mesopotamia, pre-Hispanic Mexico, and early China to argue that “the English minsters’ attributes of higher civilization, wider networks, and legitimacy transcending local kingship look typical of this developmental stage, when the most extended and sophisticated modes of organization are characteristically in religious hands.”³

Blair’s argument, despite the quality of the research, is flawed in that it completely disregards the fact that during the eighth century there were very sizable settlements—the emporia at Southampton, London, Ipswich, and York—

¹ Blair, *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society*, 246-90.

² Blair, *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society*, 262.

³ Blair, *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society*, 263-5.

that already functioned as towns.⁴ Although Blair is correct in highlighting the importance of the minsters' wide networks and "legitimacy"—in this case their Christianity and *Romanitas*—the thousands of craftsmen and traders living in the emporia at London and York, just a short distance from local cathedral communities, and at Southampton and Ipswich, which had no known religious houses, had their own far-flung networks of connections and were integrated into an "extended and sophisticated mode of organization" that stretched throughout the region and across the Channel.⁵ Blair's dismissal of the contribution of these secular communities to the process of town formation, therefore, oversimplifies the complex interplay of economic, social, cultural, and political forces that influenced the development of the Anglo-Saxon towns and detracts from what is otherwise a well-evidenced argument detailing the various and significant contributions of religious institutions to the evolution of towns in England from the seventh through the tenth centuries.

Martin Carver, in his archaeological study of the origin of Stafford, persuasively refutes Blair's "minster hypothesis," citing Blair's conflation of the different types of religious communities that existed in Britain during the seventh to ninth centuries under the term "minster," and the lack of widespread archaeological evidence for religious houses underlying *burh* sites.⁶ Carver notes that, at Stafford, the founding of St. Bertelin's appears to have

⁴ See Chapter 2, 15-17.

⁵ The extent of these networks is detailed in chapter 2. Blair, *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society*, 264.

⁶ M. O. H. Carver, *The Birth of a Borough: An Archaeological Study of Anglo-Saxon Stafford* (Woodbridge ; Rochester NY, 2010), 128-30.

coincided with, rather than preceeded, that of the *burh*.⁷ It should also be noted that Carver additionally rejects the so-called “royal hypothesis” which argues that the precursors to *burhs* were royal estates, as well as Martin Biddle’s and David Hill’s arguments that the *burhs* were founded to be towns.⁸ The hypothesis that Carver puts forth in their stead is an updated and nuanced version of Maitland’s “garrison theory,” arguing that Stafford and the other *burhs* were founded to be Roman style forts with appurtenant *vici*.⁹

Carver, like Blair, is correct in arguing that the West Saxon founders of the *burhs* were influenced by their perceptions of the Roman past, however, his dismissal of other Continental influences and his categorization of the Roman inspiration as primarily military in nature is, again, too limited. (see chapter 3) Moreover, to project the circumstances of the founding of a late, northern, and clearly minor *burh* such as Stafford onto all of the West Saxon foundations is to employ the same type of “prescriptive” argument that Carver accuses Blair of using. Despite the legionary appearance of tenth-century Stafford, reducing the West Saxon program of *burh* construction to a fundamentally military exercise ignores the mounting evidence for domestic habitation from the larger *burh* sites such as London, Winchester, and Worcester and dramatically underestimates the foresight of their founders. Carver’s “Roman Fort” theory also ignores that Blair is actually correct in citing that a number of the *burhs* were founded at sites where churches and religious

⁷ Carver, *The Birth of a Borough: An Archaeological Study of Anglo-Saxon Stafford*, 58-101.

⁸ Carver, *The Birth of a Borough: An Archaeological Study of Anglo-Saxon Stafford*, 132-5.

⁹ Carver, *The Birth of a Borough: An Archaeological Study of Anglo-Saxon Stafford*, 142-5, Maitland, *Domesday Book and Beyond*, 184-92.

houses were well established prior to the ninth century and that Alfred and his heirs were often keen to incorporate them into their new settlements.¹⁰

Both Blair's and Carver's theories, while flawed, offer important insights into the development of the Anglo-Saxon towns and should not be ignored. If we temper Blair's argument a little and examine the evidence with a slightly wider lens, we can see that individual religious houses and the Church as a whole were major contributors economically and intellectually to the development of towns in Anglo-Saxon England. They simply cannot be given primacy over the other forces at work, such as the rise of a monetized and commercialized economy, royal initiative, and both the positive and negative interactions Anglo-Saxons had with foreign peoples. With regard to Carver's estimation of Stafford, if we look at the totality of the *burhs* founded by Alfred and his heirs the picture is one not just of bare-bones fortresses but of a complex mix of fortified settlements.¹¹ In actuality, despite the overt antagonism, the two theories are not totally incompatible. If we simply utilize Blair's insights in a less doctrinaire manner and retain the key element of Carver's theory of *burh* development, the emulation of the Roman Empire, it produces a model that fits the ninth and tenth century landscape and the activities of Alfred and his heirs much better. What we arrive at then is a model in which churches and religious houses were key elements in a Roman inspired system of fortified settlements.

¹⁰ Blair, *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society*, 287-90, 330-40.

¹¹ An overview of most sites can be found in Hill, "Gazetteer," 189-231.

The earliest groundwork for the physical and intellectual incorporation of churches and religious houses into the West Saxon *burhs* was laid by the Gregorian Mission in the late sixth and seventh centuries. According to Bede, Augustine and his followers recited the following prayer as they approached Canterbury for the first time in 597:

“We beseech Thee, O Lord, in Thy great mercy, that Thy wrath and anger may be turned away from this city and from Thy holy house, for we have sinned. Alleluia.”¹²

Whether or not this is an accurate quote or an invention of Bede’s, it is an appropriate attribution as the prayer is a Gallican antiphon used during Rogation Day processions in the former Roman towns of Gaul.¹³ It is appropriate because as Augustine and his monks entered the former *Durovernum Cantiacorum*, they carried with them Roman Christianity and all of the connotations of antiquity, authority, and *Romanitas* that came with it. What Augustine and his followers brought to England were the very qualities that Alfred the Great and his heirs would seek to appropriate for themselves and their new towns in the ninth and tenth centuries.

When Augustine and his fellow missionaries arrived in Kent at the end of the sixth century, they found a landscape dotted by the ruins of the former Roman *civitates*.¹⁴ These ruins were monumental artifacts of an urbanized, imperial, and Christian past that, in eastern Britain, must have been but a vague communal-memory for the descendants of the Britons who had virtually abandoned what remained of the Roman towns and an even more abstract and

¹² Bede, *HE*, 76. Hereafter HE.

¹³ Bede, *HE*, 76. n. 1.

¹⁴ Esmonde Cleary, *The Ending of Roman Britain*, 131-4.

remote historical idea for the English whose ancestors had arrived in the wake of their deterioration. For the most part, at the dawn of the seventh century, the old Roman towns in eastern Britain and what may have remained of the ancient churches within them were derelict and sparsely, if at all, populated.¹⁵ Even in western Britain, where English culture was less evident and there were some communities that had probably preserved their Christian identity, the few churches and monasteries that may have persisted in the former Roman towns existed in near isolation, with little or no other discernible urban activity taking place within what was left of their walls.¹⁶

The towns of Roman Britain died slow, withering deaths and, overall, the evidence points toward a steady decline in new construction and rebuilding within most towns during the fourth century.¹⁷ In some towns, ever-dwindling populations may have lingered on into the sixth and, perhaps, the early seventh century, but their persistence represents the tail end of post-Roman occupation rather than the seeds of their later Anglo-Saxon revival.¹⁸ Even Wroxeter, where there was a sizable clearing of land and the construction of a number of new, timber buildings in the sixth century, was abandoned by the seventh century.¹⁹ There is some evidence for new, small-scale settlement

¹⁵ Burch, Treveil and Keene, *Early Medieval and Later Poultry and Cheapside*, 17-20, Martin Henig, "The Fate of Late Roman Towns," in H. Hamerow, D. A. Hinton and S. Crawford (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Anglo-Saxon Archaeology* (2011), 515-33, at 520-30, Esmonde Cleary, *The Ending of Roman Britain*, 131-4, Dark and Dark, *The Landscape of Roman Britain*, 141-2.

¹⁶ Blair, *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society*, 65-9, Esmonde Cleary, *The Ending of Roman Britain*, 188-205.

¹⁷ Faulkner, "Change and Decline," 42-6.

¹⁸ Esmonde Cleary, *The Ending of Roman Britain*, 162-87, Faulkner, "Change and Decline," 29-48.

¹⁹ Roger White, "Wroxeter and the Transformation of the Late-Roman Urbanism," in T. R. Slater (ed.), *Towns in Decline, AD 100-1600* (2000), 96-119, at 102-17.

within a few of the old Roman towns such as Canterbury, Colchester, and Leicester starting in the mid-fifth century, but none of these little communities were in any way urban or long-lived.²⁰ Whether the human presence within their walls was some form of debased and dwindling sub-Roman continuity, a settlement of new Germanic immigrants, the attempts of local potentates to display some claim to the power and authority of the ruins and their imperial past, or some combination of the three, the level of occupation in the former Roman towns of Britain at the turn of the seventh century was less than substantial.²¹

It was Augustine, his followers, and those churchmen who came after them, therefore, who primarily restored to the old Roman towns of eastern Britain the only institutions and populations that persisted and thrived into the ninth century. Thereafter, during the ninth century, West Saxon royal policy put into place the other essential elements—a secular population, commercial activity, and royal administration— that fostered the evolution of the former Roman *urbs* from specialized centers of religious activity to full-fledged towns. Perhaps more importantly, the presence of the bishops and their communities in the former Roman towns introduced or reinforced, in the minds of Anglo-Saxon kings and elites, the idea that a city or a town was the proper seat from which religious and/or secular power should be exercised.

²⁰ Gavin Speed, "Mind the (Archaeological) Gap: Tracing Life in Early Post-Roman Towns," in D. Sami and G. Speed (eds.), *Debating Urbanism within and Beyond the Walls A.D. 300-700: Proceedings of a Conference Held at the University of Leicester, 15th November 2008* (2010), 83-109, at 96-106.

²¹ Henig, "The Fate of Late Roman Towns," 519-30.

The Gregorian Mission's inherent predisposition toward the reuse of Roman urban sites for establishing episcopal churches is revealed by the first four sees Augustine founded upon his arrival in England; Canterbury, Rochester, London, and York.²² Indeed, Gregory's initial plan to found metropolitan sees at London and York demonstrates two points; that Gregory was thinking in terms of a town- or city-based episcopal hierarchy, like that of Italy and Gaul, and that he was unaware of the full extent of the urban decline in former province of *Britannia* or the specifics of the distribution of territorial power there.²³ As S.T. Loseby states, "the original Christian missionaries had brought with them preconceptions of a special status for Roman centres, fortified by Pope Gregory's blueprint for diocesan organization, their new converts had hitherto not shared."²⁴ In the sixth century, the ruins of the former Roman towns of Britain appear to have held little personal attraction for the vast majority of Anglo-Saxons who instead built timber halls in rural settlements as displays of their power.²⁵

The political situation in 597, however, was advantageous for the Gregorian Mission in that Æthelbert of Kent was the dominant power in southern England and he was familiar with Roman Christianity and Continental traditions due to his close ties to Francia. Augustine, having learned from the bishops of Francia, that Æthelbert was the preeminent ruler in southern

²² Bede, *HE*, 115, 42, 87, Blair, *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society*, 34-7.

²³ Bede, *HE*, 104, Blair, *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society*, 37-9, Nicholas Brooks, *The Early History of the Church of Canterbury: Christ Church from 597 to 1066* (Leicester, 1984), 10-1.

²⁴ S.T. Loseby, "Power and Towns in Late Roman Britain and Early Anglo-Saxon England," in G. Ripoll, J. M. Gurt Esparraguera and A. Chavarría (eds.), *Sedes Regiae (Ann. 400-800)* (2000), 319-970, at 351-2.

²⁵ Loseby, "Power and Towns," 348.

England directed his evangelism toward the king and was rewarded by a positive reception.²⁶ Æthelbert's enthusiasm for conversion was no doubt influenced by his Christian wife Bertha, a Frankish princess, and her Frankish bishop, Liudhard, who had established a small church dedicated to St. Martin just a short distance from Canterbury.²⁷ It was pragmatism and practicality, then, that led Augustine to establish his metropolitan see at Canterbury rather than London as Gregory had planned. In Kent, Augustine and his followers found a king who had marital ties to the Continent and who already displayed an affinity for the Continental ideas that they carried.

After his baptism, Æthelbert gave Augustine a section of Canterbury which was deemed "suitable to his rank" and on this parcel was the supposed late-Roman church that Augustine restored and re-dedicated to Christ the Savior.²⁸ From this point forward, Christ Church became the defining institution in Canterbury and the center of a larger intramural and extramural religious complex.²⁹ In the thoroughly Roman fashion, Augustine also established a monastery dedicated to SS. Peter and Paul (later St. Augustine's) just outside the walls of the city, which was to be the burial church for the archbishops and the kings of Kent. The kings of Kent would therefore be memorialized in a style reminiscent of the Christian emperors and on par with their Frankish contemporaries. As John Blair states, "it could have appealed to

²⁶ Brooks, *The Early History of the Church of Canterbury*, 7-8.

²⁷ Brooks, *The Early History of the Church of Canterbury*, 8-9.

²⁸ Bede, *HE*, 78, 114, Brooks, *The Early History of the Church of Canterbury*, 9, 15.

²⁹ Brooks, *The Early History of the Church of Canterbury*, 9, Blair, *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society*, 65-8.

Æthelbert as well as Augustine that the arrangement simulated an antique, classical setting for what was to be both a monastic and a mortuary church.”³⁰

Canterbury was not completely unoccupied when Augustine and his monks arrived, but it had long ceased to be a functioning town in any sense of the word.³¹ Excavations at the Marlowe Car Park site revealed that, after a short period of substantial or even total abandonment during the fifth century, Canterbury was once again inhabited.³² Evidence for twenty-nine sunken-featured buildings and two surface-built buildings dating from the fifth to seventh centuries was found on the site along with Anglo-Saxon pottery and evidence of weaving and metal-working.³³ The community uncovered the Marlowe Car Park pre-dated the arrival of Augustine and his missionaries and was, therefore, not a consequence of the development of the cathedral.³⁴ It is likely that the Marlowe sites were connected to a possible royal assembly point or market in the nearby Roman theatre.³⁵ Moreover, there is documentary evidence indicating that Æthelbert had a hall within Canterbury’s Roman walls, perhaps in imitation of his Frankish in-laws, and it has been suggested that the Marlowe Car park community was connected to the royal residence there.³⁶

Overall, the level of sixth-century occupation appears to have been limited and, as with other the former Roman towns in Britain, a layer of “dark

³⁰ Blair, *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society*, 62.

³¹ Brooks, *The Early History of the Church of Canterbury*, 16-7, Blockley, Blockley, Blockley, Frere and Stow, *Excavations in the Marlowe Car Park*, 19-21, 8, 280-350.

³² Blockley, Blockley, Blockley, Frere and Stow, *Excavations in the Marlowe Car Park*, 280-350.

³³ Blockley, Blockley, Blockley, Frere and Stow, *Excavations in the Marlowe Car Park*, 280-350.

³⁴ Blockley, Blockley, Blockley, Frere and Stow, *Excavations in the Marlowe Car Park*, 20-1.

³⁵ Blockley, Blockley, Blockley, Frere and Stow, *Excavations in the Marlowe Car Park*, 20-1.

³⁶ Robin Fleming, *Britain after Rome: The Fall and Rise, from 400-1070* (London, 2010), 185-8.

earth” had covered the Roman strata of Canterbury and obscured much of the ancient street system and property lines.³⁷ Anglo-Saxon Canterbury was, therefore, for all intents and purposes a new settlement. The establishment of the metropolitan see in the ruins provided a gravitational pull that must have attracted additional settlers to the former city and its vicinity to provide for the needs of the new Christian community there.

Bede’s narrative of Augustine’s mission proceeds by noting the establishment of the sees of Rochester by Justus and of London by Mellitus in 604.³⁸ Both of these former Roman cities lay within the dominion of Augustine’s patron Æthelbert and both appear to have been abandoned and unoccupied when their episcopal churches, St. Andrew’s at Rochester and St. Paul’s at London, were founded.³⁹ The early success of Mellitus’ mission to the East Saxons and his installation at London can, in part, be attributed to Æthelbert’s influence over his nephew Saeberht king of Essex. As at Canterbury, the presence of the bishops and their communities at Rochester and London marked a new beginning for these sites.⁴⁰ Æthelbert clearly reserved the right to distribute properties in the abandoned Roman towns—a right that would be

³⁷ Burch, Treveil and Keene, *Early Medieval and Later Poultry and Cheapside*, 19-, Brooks, *The Early History of the Church of Canterbury*, 16-22, Nicholas Brooks, “Canterbury and Rome: The Limits and Myth of Romanitas,” in C. i. d. s. s. a. Medioevo (ed.), *Roma Fra Oriente E Occidente: 19-24 Aprile 2001* (2001), 797-832, at 802-13, Dark and Dark, *The Landscape of Roman Britain*, 120-2.

³⁸ Bede, *HE*, 142.

³⁹ Nicholas Brooks, “Rochester, A.D. 400-1066,” in T. Ayers and T. Tatton-Brown (eds.), *Medieval Art, Architecture and Archaeology at Rochester* (2006), 6-21, at 8-9, Robert Cowie and Charlotte Harding, “Saxon Settlement and Economy from the Dark Ages to Domesday,” in T. Brigham and M. o. L. A. Service (eds.), *The Archaeology of Greater London: An Assessment of Archaeological Evidence for Human Presence in the Area Now Covered by Greater London* (2000), 171-206, at 178.

⁴⁰ Brooks, “Rochester, A.D. 400-1066,” 8-15.

vigorously exercised by later Anglo-Saxon kings—but he was more than willing to gift significant areas inside their walls to the messengers of his new religion. This indicates that in the early seventh century these towns, although of symbolic importance or valuable as sources of stone and other raw materials, were insignificant enough to be parceled out to the fledgling Church without much concern for their economic or strategic value.

The seventh-century cathedral at London lay to the east of the Roman Ludgate on the site of the current Wren cathedral. Although the exact alignment and dimensions of the first Anglo-Saxon cathedral are unknown, the rectangular cathedral precinct, running west to east from Ave Maria Lane to St. Paul's School, New Change and north to south from Paternoster Square to Carter Lane, was set by the late ninth century.⁴¹ To the west of the Roman ruins, along the Thames, was the nascent trading settlement of *Lundenwic*, which would grow to become the largest settlement of any kind in England by the mid-eighth century.⁴² The open area adjacent to the former Roman town was a much more practical place for a settlement of craftsmen and traders who needed open space to build the sunken-featured buildings and earth-fast halls that made up their homes and workshops and ready access to the unobstructed shoreline to beach their boats and the boats of foreign merchants.⁴³

⁴¹ *St Paul's Cathedral before Wren*, ed. John Schofield, (Swindon, England, 2011), 54-9, Burch, Treveil and Keene, *Early Medieval and Later Poultry and Cheapside*, 167-9.

⁴² Leary and Brown, *Tatberht's Lundenwic: Archaeological Excavations in Middle Saxon London*, 3-5, Malcolm, Bowsher and Cowie, *Middle Saxon London*, 1-4, 32-3.

⁴³ Malcolm, Bowsher and Cowie, *Middle Saxon London*, 143-50.

The second half of Gregory's diocesan plan for England, the establishment of a metropolitan church at York, was implemented in an altered and less elevated fashion by the mission of Paulinus to Northumbrians in the 620's.⁴⁴ According to Bede, the see of York was founded by Paulinus in 627 with the baptism of King Edwin of Northumbria (Deira) in a "hastily built" wooden church dedicated to St. Peter.⁴⁵ Bede goes on to note that, after his baptism, Edwin commissioned a stone church to be built to replace the original wooden chapel, but that Edwin was killed before it could be completed, and it was eventually finished by King Oswald sometime after 634.⁴⁶ The stone church, however, must have been neglected in the following years, as it had to be restored by Wilfrid after his appointment in 669.⁴⁷

The neglect of the church at York reflects the reality that the Gregorian mission's efforts to convert the Anglo-Saxons and to create a functioning diocesan structure were not wholly uncontested and that old Roman towns where they chose to build their churches were not sufficiently populated to maintain a church in their absence. In so much as Augustine and his followers early successes were built upon the conversion of powerful and generous kings, such as Æthelbert and Edwin, the deaths of those kings could reverse much of their progress. When Saeberht of Essex died in 616, his sons reverted to paganism and drove Mellitus from London.⁴⁸ The see was not restored until 653 when Cedd was made bishop of London by Sigebert of Essex who had converted

⁴⁴ Blair, *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society*, 69-70.

⁴⁵ Bede, *HE*, 186, Tweddle, Moulden and Logan, *Anglian York*, 121-4.

⁴⁶ Bede, *HE*, 186, Tweddle, Moulden and Logan, *Anglian York*, 126.

⁴⁷ Tweddle, Moulden and Logan, *Anglian York*, 126-7.

⁴⁸ Bede, *HE*, 280.?

at the insistence of Oswiu of Northumbria.⁴⁹ The see at York was also vacated for a time after 633 when Edwin was killed and Paulinus fled to Kent.⁵⁰ The Northumbrian see was later moved to Lindisfarne by the Ionan bishop Aidan, but was restored to York with the appointment of Chad in 664.⁵¹ Despite the travails of the first half of the seventh century, the sees established at Canterbury, Rochester, London, and York were firmly embedded into the religious and political framework of Anglo-Saxon England by third quarter of the seventh century and by the end of Archbishop Theodore's reign in 690 the episcopate had expanded to include sees at, among other places, the former Roman towns of Winchester and Worcester.⁵²

The placement of bishoprics in the early seventh century demonstrates that Augustine and those who followed him were actively following an agenda that focused on the reuse of Roman sites. The most obvious conclusion that can be drawn about the Gregorian Mission's choice of sites is that it was a statement of their *Romanitas*—which it was. Moreover, on deeper level it may have also been, as Nicholas Brooks argues, a rebuke of the vestigial British Church and its bishops and their claim to Britain's Roman past.⁵³ Augustine and his Italian bishops may have been advocating for their claim as the rightful representatives of an unbroken and more current Roman and Christian tradition, one that may have been more appealing to ruling elites who

⁴⁹ Bede, *HE*, 280.

⁵⁰ Bede, *HE*, 202-4.

⁵¹ Bede, *HE*, 218, 316.

⁵² Blair, *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society*, 79-80.

⁵³ Brooks, "Canterbury and Rome: The Limits and Myth of Romanitas," 817-29.

embraced an English identity than the religion of a subject people.⁵⁴ The reuse of Roman sites by the first generations of bishops in Anglo-Saxon England should also be seen as an extension of what was familiar to Continental, particularly Italian, churchmen who viewed a city-based episcopate as the norm and who were trying to recreate that model in a region that had no surviving Roman towns.⁵⁵

The settlements that the Gregorian Mission had established at Canterbury, Rochester, London and York and were beginning to establish at Winchester and Worcester were not yet actual towns but rather religious communities that occupied a physical and ideological space which conformed in the most important ways to the missionaries' conception of a city.⁵⁶ For Augustine and his bishops, the new churches and residences they erected were imbued with an inherent *urbanitas* by virtue of their papal commission and their location amongst the ruins or the former Roman towns. Each of these fallen towns was in a way like ancient Rome, beset by pagan barbarians and ready to be rebuilt as a Christian city.⁵⁷ Augustine and his followers had, therefore, recreated what they believed was the heart, or perhaps more appropriately the soul, of a Continental city, a cathedral church at the center of a former Roman town.⁵⁸ This very attitude has been identified in the *Historia Francorum* of Augustine's contemporary Gregory of Tours, for whom

⁵⁴ Brooks, "Canterbury and Rome: The Limits and Myth of Romanitas," 826-9.

⁵⁵ Blair, *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society*, 34-9.

⁵⁶ Blair, *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society*, 246-51.

⁵⁷ Gregory, *The Homilies of St. Gregory the Great on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel*, ed. T. Gray and J. Cownie (Etna, Calif., 1990), 1.

⁵⁸ Fleming, *Britain after Rome: The Fall and Rise, from 400-1070*, 154-5.

“it is ultimately the bishops and saints alone who give the *civitas* its identity.”⁵⁹ The absence of large secular populations living within the walls of their new “cities” may not have been viewed as a negative by bishops who had been raised in monastic settings.⁶⁰

Just as the early bishops of Anglo-Saxon England were establishing their churches and religious communities in the ruins of Roman towns during the seventh century, secular settlements that specialized in those functions that would lead to the reemergence of actual town-life in post-Roman England in eighth century—intensive trade and craft production— were also beginning to coalesce just outside the walls of some of the old Roman towns on nearby beaches and riverbanks. These open, waterside sites were attractive to craftsmen and traders as they were far more accessible by boat than the remnants of the old Roman quays.⁶¹ The emporia at London and York were, therefore, literally growing up right next to the episcopal communities tucked away in their Roman enclosures, and at Canterbury and Winchester the emporia at Fordwich and Southampton were a short distance away.⁶²

By comparison, during the eighth century, the emporia were far larger and more densely populated than the neighboring ecclesiastic settlements in the former Roman towns. *Lundenwic*, the extramural craft production and

⁵⁹ S.T. Loseby, "Gregory's Cities: Urban Functions in Sixth Century Gaul," in I. N. Wood (ed.), *Franks and Alamanni in the Merovingian Period : An Ethnographic Perspective*, Studies in historical archaeoethnology ; v. 3 (1998), 239-84, at 256.

⁶⁰ Leo Carruthers, "Monks among Barbarians: Augustine of Canterbury and His Successors in Bede's Account of the Roman and Monastic Origins of the English Church," in C. Royer-Hemet (ed.), *Canterbury: A Medieval City* (2010), 23-41, at 31-5.

⁶¹ Malcolm, Bowsher and Cowie, *Middle Saxon London*, 143.

⁶² David Hill and Robert Cowie, *Wics: The Early Medieval Trading Centres of Northern Europe* (Sheffield, 2001), 1.

trading site just upstream from the ruins of the Roman city of *Londinium*, covered some sixty hectares along the Strand and was home to between 5,000 and 7,000 people at its height.⁶³ York's emporium, Anglian *Eoforwic*, was located to the south of the old Roman fortress at the confluence of the River Ouse and the River Foss and spanned approximately twenty-five to sixty-five hectares, with perhaps 1,000 to 2000 inhabitants.⁶⁴ The emporium at Southampton, *Hamwic*, was located between the River Test and the River Itchen, just a few kilometers south of the Winchester and was home to between 2,000 and 3,000 people.⁶⁵ We know much less of Canterbury's early emporium, Fordwich, but it must have been far smaller than its counterparts at London and Southampton.⁶⁶

Although there was a distinct separation between the episcopal settlements and their secular neighbors, the bishops at London, York, Canterbury, and Winchester and their communities must have had some involvement in the pastoral care of the sizable populations of the emporia. The royal officials and elites who sometimes resided in the emporia must have at times attended mass at the nearby cathedral churches within the walls of the old Roman towns. We know that the bishops of the former Roman towns were intertwined with economic activities of their secular neighbors.⁶⁷ The bishops and their communities were obviously ready consumers for the

⁶³ Malcolm, Bowsher and Cowie, *Middle Saxon London*, 2-3, 192-3.

⁶⁴ Tweddle, Moulden and Logan, *Anglian York*, 93, Cowie, Kemp, Morton and Wade, "Gazetteer of Known English Wics," 92-4.

⁶⁵ Andrews, *Excavations at Hamwic: Volume 2 Excavations at Six Dials*, 252.

⁶⁶ Cowie, Kemp, Morton and Wade, "Gazetteer of Known English Wics,"

⁶⁷ Kelly, "Trading Privileges from Eighth-Century England," at 3-14, Middleton, "Early Medieval Port Customs," at 313-58.

products of the emporia and their rural estates must have also been suppliers of the food and raw materials that kept the emporia going.⁶⁸ Nevertheless, despite the economic ties between the bishops of the former Roman towns and the emporia, the loci of commercial power and the loci of religious power remained separate during the eighth century. The cathedrals and religious houses founded in the wake of the Augustinian Mission brought new life to the Roman ruins and their presence must have reinforced the power of those places in the minds of Anglo-Saxon elites and common folk alike. The creation of new sacred spaces or the revival of antiquated ones within the former Roman towns gave them a new currency and a new prestige.

The comfortable separation from the traders, craftsmen, and royal officials of the emporia that was enjoyed by the eighth-century bishops of the former Roman towns was, however, brought to an abrupt end by the upheaval and economic dislocation caused by the viking raids and invasions of late-eighth and ninth centuries.⁶⁹ During the ninth and tenth centuries, one response to the viking threat employed by the ascendant West Saxon dynasty of Alfred the Great was to relocate the secular functions of the emporia into new, fortified towns known as *burhs*, many of which employed the defensive circuits of the old Roman sites occupied by the episcopal communities.⁷⁰ In the southeast and the midlands, royal prerogative and secular life, therefore, began to encroach upon spaces that had hitherto been the exclusive property, both

⁶⁸ Hamerow, *Early Medieval Settlements the Archaeology of Rural Communities in Northwest Europe 400-900*, 123.

⁶⁹ Abels, *Alfred the Great*, 102-19.

⁷⁰ Biddle, "Towns," 202, Abels, *Alfred the Great*, 194-218.

physically and ideologically, of the bishops and their churches. Somewhat ironically, it was the same Roman and Continental ideas of what constituted a town that influenced both the early bishops of the Gregorian Mission and Alfred and his heirs in their choices to repurpose former Roman sites.⁷¹

In 886, Alfred the Great “restored” London and from that point, if not slightly earlier, the walled city became a focal point of secular settlement and commercial activity.⁷² The two, previously distinct settlements at London—the emporium and the cathedral community—were effectively brought together behind the newly rebuilt walls and given over to the rule of Alfred’s son-in-law Æthelred, ealdorman of Mercia.⁷³ The area within the circuit of walls that had been the sole preserve of the bishop of London and his community slowly began to be settled by traders, craftsmen, and secular and ecclesiastic elites. We know that Alfred granted Wæferth the bishop of Worcester a plot known as *Hwætmundestan* within the walls at this time.⁷⁴ The River Thames and Cheapside were the secular focus of Alfred’s new London and the laying out of plots and the construction of buildings appears to have begun along the waterfront at what is now Queenhithe, an area originally known as Æthelred’s *Hithe*.⁷⁵ There is also evidence for the laying out of streets within the walls at London running north from the River Thames to the market-street of Cheapside

⁷¹ Hill, “The Origins of Alfred’s Urban Policies,” 223-8.

⁷² Keene, “Alfred and London,” 241-7.

⁷³ Keene, “Alfred and London,” 241-7.

⁷⁴ S346.

⁷⁵ Robin Wroe-Brown, “The Saxon Origins of Queenhithe,” *Transactions of the London and Middlesex Archaeological Society*, 50 (1999), 12-6, at 12.

in the late ninth and early tenth centuries.⁷⁶ Indeed, Cheapside itself appears to have been laid out during this period.⁷⁷

The excavations at 1 Poultry and its vicinity have revealed evidence for manufacturing within the walls at London starting in the mid-ninth century. Debris found at sites at the east end of Cheapside, along the side of the Wallbrook Stream, indicate that antler working, leather working, iron working, and textile production were being practiced by the new inhabitants of the walled city.⁷⁸ The earliest development of Alfred's restoration appears to have been focused not on expanding the cathedral or its precinct, but on reestablishing within the walls the trade and manufacturing which previously occurred at the emporium. Indeed, the new secular construction of the late-ninth and tenth centuries can be seen as actually hemming in the cathedral ward.⁷⁹

At Winchester, excavations in the area of Northgate House on Staple Gardens and at the Winchester Library on Jewry Street suggest that new roads, such as medieval Brudene Street, were being laid out over the accumulated "Dark Earth" in the mid-ninth century.⁸⁰ The evidence also indicates that new plots and boundaries were being laid out at this time and at least seven buildings in the study area can be dated to the period between 850 and 950.⁸¹ The excavations also revealed evidence for a number of crafts; iron working,

⁷⁶ Burch, Treveil and Keene, *Early Medieval and Later Poultry and Cheapside*, 21-2, 174.

⁷⁷ Burch, Treveil and Keene, *Early Medieval and Later Poultry and Cheapside*, 21-2, 174.

⁷⁸ Burch, Treveil and Keene, *Early Medieval and Later Poultry and Cheapside*, 22-3, 8, 32-4, 201-2, 15-29.

⁷⁹ *St Paul's Cathedral before Wren*, ed. Schofield, 57-9.

⁸⁰ Ford and Teague, *Winchester a City in the Making*, 189-90.

⁸¹ Ford and Teague, *Winchester a City in the Making*, 190-7.

cloth production, copper alloy working, furriery, as well as bone and antler working.⁸² On the whole, most of the assemblages for these properties reveal a population of lower status individuals engaged in craftwork.⁸³ As the bishop and the cathedral community had at London, it appears that the Bishop of Winchester and the community at Old Minster were welcoming new secular neighbors into the walled town by the end of the ninth century.

Worcester underwent a transformation during the late-ninth century as well. Excavations undertaken at Deansway revealed evidence for secular occupation that was contemporary with the construction of the defenses of the *burh*.⁸⁴ Buildings on two of the sites identified during the Deansway project appear to have fronted onto the Birdport, a major street in the Anglo-Saxon town which led to a market area beyond the *burh* defenses, indicating that they were planned urban plots.⁸⁵ These same sites also produced evidence for ironworking and tanning during this period, an indication that there was possible commercial activity taking place there.⁸⁶

The type of secular occupation uncovered at London, Winchester, and Worcester, indicates that when establishing their *burhs*, Alfred and his heirs had greater long-term aspirations than just protecting existing churches or religious houses or even creating a series of simple fortresses. As Martin Carver has shown, the evidence from Stafford indicates that existing churches and religious communities were neither the exclusive forbears nor the *raison d'être*

⁸² Ford and Teague, *Winchester a City in the Making*, 200-6.

⁸³ Ford and Teague, *Winchester a City in the Making*, 223.

⁸⁴ Dalwood, Edwards and Blades, *Excavations at Deansway, Worcester*, 52-9.

⁸⁵ Dalwood, Edwards and Blades, *Excavations at Deansway, Worcester*, 55.

⁸⁶ Dalwood, Edwards and Blades, *Excavations at Deansway, Worcester*, 57, 60.

of all of the *burhs*.⁸⁷ That stated, the wider evidence discussed above from London, Winchester, and Worcester, however, also discounts the universality of Carver's "Roman fortress" theory. If the origins of the *burhs* cannot be pigeon-holed as being exclusively *minsters* or fortresses, then we are forced to return to the view that the *burhs* were an assortment of different types of places, chosen for a variety of reasons, that were fortified and in many cases intended to be towns.⁸⁸

Even though defense, secular settlement, craft-production, and trade appear to have been the most immediate concerns for the re-founders of London, Winchester, and Worcester, the incorporation of churches and religious house into their new *burhs* was still of great importance to them. Alfred's and his heirs' intention to promote the development of actual towns—based on Roman and Continental models—insured that churches and religious houses were prominent features of their *burhs*. As Blair has advocated, from a practical standpoint, existing churches and religious houses provided a ready-made nucleus around which the other functions of the *burh*, royal administrations, minting, trade and craft-production, could be planted.⁸⁹ Although, strategic and practical concerns may have been the prime movers of Alfred's and his heirs' efforts in founding their *burhs*, the West Saxons were not ignorant of the symbolic value of churches and religious houses nor did they fail to utilize them for that purpose. When there was no extant church at a *burh*

⁸⁷ Carver, *The Birth of a Borough: An Archaeological Study of Anglo-Saxon Stafford*, 100-1, 27-45.

⁸⁸ Biddle, "Towns," 124-34, Hill, "Towns as Structures," 201-32.

⁸⁹ Blair, *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society*, 330-1.

site or if the existing church or churches did not suit their purposes, Alfred and his heirs founded new churches and religious houses.

Edward the Elder, perhaps following through on a plan initiated by his father, founded a religious house dedicated to St. Peter at Winchester, which came to be known as New Minster.⁹⁰ The new basilica was far larger than the existing cathedral, Old Minster, and may have been intended to serve as a royal mausoleum or as the primary place of worship for the growing population of the town.⁹¹ In the Mercian territories, Æthelflaed and her husband, Ealdorman Æthelred, founded new religious houses at Chester, St. Werburgh's and St. Peter's, and at Gloucester, St. Oswald's.⁹² Even in the midst of ongoing efforts to recover territory from the vikings, the West Saxons spent copiously on the houses they founded in their towns. Indeed, St. Oswald's was so lavishly appointed that it came to know as the "Golden Minster."⁹³

The significant royal investments made in new religious communities at Winchester, Gloucester, and Chester indicate that the West Saxons believed that they had an important role to play in the *burhs*. Moreover, the symbolic and political value of these institutions was critical to the West Saxons who were expanding their power geographically and positioning themselves as the

⁹⁰ Barbara Yorke, "The Bishops of Winchester, the Kings of Wessex, and the Development of Winchester in the Ninth and Early Tenth Centuries," in D. A. E. Pelteret (ed.), *Anglo-Saxon History: Basic Readings* (2000), 107-20, at 114-7, Alexander R. Rumble, "Edward the Elder and the Churches of Winchester and Wessex," in N. H. Higham, David (ed.), *Edward the Elder 899-924* (2001), 230-47, at 231-4.

⁹¹ Rumble, "Edward the Elder and the Churches of Winchester and Wessex," 234.

⁹² Alan Thacker, "Chester and Gloucester: Early Ecclesiastical Organization in Two Mercian Burhs," *Northern History*, 18 (1982), 199-211, at 201-5, 7-9.

⁹³ Caroline Heighway, "Gloucester and the New Minster of St. Oswald," in N. H. Higham, David (ed.), *Edward the Elder 899-924* (2001), 102-11, at 106.

unifiers and defenders of the Christian English.⁹⁴ Barbara Yorke has argued that the founding of the New Minster at Winchester, side-by-side with the smaller Old Minster, may have been intended to accentuate the fact that Alfred and his heirs were now the kings of England rather than just the kings of Wessex.⁹⁵ Alfred and his heirs, by building and fostering churches and religious houses in their would-be towns, were engaging in a practice—well established on the Continent—in which rulers built Christian monuments in cities and towns to display their power and legitimacy.⁹⁶

Alfred and his children's shared vision of what their *burhs* could become was informed by what they knew of contemporary, Continental towns and their ideas of what Rome, Jerusalem, and the other notable towns of ancient world were. We know that Alfred himself visited Rome twice as a child and he must have been influenced by what he had seen there.⁹⁷ Moreover, the Rome that Alfred knew, and the one that must have informed his image of the Empire and its towns, was one that was centered on the Church. As Chris Wickham has stated, "the 'myth of Rome' was indeed, more and more, the new Christian Rome of basilicas and martyrs' tombs."⁹⁸ Alfred's image of Rome was probably similar to the memories of the city that Augustine carried with him to England in 597. In the minds of the new West Saxon rulers of England, their towns

⁹⁴ Abels, *Alfred the Great*, 184-7.

⁹⁵ Yorke, "The Bishops of Winchester, the Kings of Wessex, and the Development of Winchester in the Ninth and Early Tenth Centuries," 116-7.

⁹⁶ Gian Pietro Brogiolo, "Ideas of the Town in Italy During the Transition from Antiquity to the Middle Ages," in G. P. Brogiolo and B. Ward-Perkins (eds.), *The Idea and Ideal of the Town between Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (1999), 99-126, at 99-126.

⁹⁷ ASC (a), s.a. 853, Asser, *Life of King Alfred*, 8, 11.chs, Keynes, "Anglo-Saxon Entries," 99-103, Hill, "The Origins of Alfred's Urban Policies," 226-8.

⁹⁸ Chris Wickham, *The Inheritance of Rome: A History of Europe from 400 to 1000* (New York, 2009), 201.

would have been incomplete or deficient without well-appointed churches and religious houses.

In aligning themselves with Rome and the papacy, Alfred and his children were literally building upon an earlier tradition followed by Alfred's father, Æthelwulf. Æthelwulf's attitudes toward Rome and the Church appear to have been influenced by both the example of his predecessors, Caedwalla and Ine, and his association with Carolingians.⁹⁹ He was making an overt statement of his own prestige and *Romanitas* when he sent his youngest son, Alfred, to Rome where he was named consul by the pope.¹⁰⁰ As Janet Nelson has stated: "in sending Alfred to Rome in 853, Æthelwulf was forging his own direct link with Leo IV and also registering his own *imitatio imperii*: just as Lothar had had his son girded with a sword by the pope, so too would the king of a West Saxon kingdom recently extended to include Kent, and Devon, and Cornwall, and already with sights set northwards to Mercia and Wales."¹⁰¹ Æthelwulf, and Alfred after him, regularly sent generous gifts of silver and gold to the Rome just as Charlemagne and his sons did.¹⁰² The West Saxon kings' support of the Church and the papacy, as that of most early-medieval kings, was based on a symbiotic relationship of reciprocal prestige. Æthelwulf and Alfred were both concerned with assuring that their dynasty was viewed as

⁹⁹ Abels, *Alfred the Great*, 59.

¹⁰⁰ Abels, *Alfred the Great*, 60-1.

¹⁰¹ Janet L. Nelson, *Rulers and Ruling Families in Early Medieval Europe: Alfred, Charles the Bald, and Others* (Aldershot Brookfield VT, 1999), 145-6.

¹⁰² Abels, *Alfred the Great*, 87, Nelson, *Rulers and Ruling Families in Early Medieval Europe: Alfred, Charles the Bald, and Others*, 146.

legitimate, as Christian, rulers who had a direct link to the Church and the Roman past.

Alfred's attitude regarding the Church was complex; he surrounded himself with bishops and theologians, he was a supporter of the papacy, and he was clearly pious and serious about improving the state of the Church in England; however, he also took control of church lands when he deemed it necessary, and he was unwavering in the collection of the geld from religious houses.¹⁰³ Most of all, Alfred was pragmatic with regard to what served the needs of his kingdom and this extended to the Church. Within the larger context of Alfred's understanding of the Church as conduit of authority and legitimacy, it is highly probable that he believed that the existence of at least one church or religious house within its walls was a necessary precondition for the establishment of a town. Alfred's own experiences on his journeys to Rome would have told him as much, as would his study of classical texts such as *Orosius* and *Boethius*.¹⁰⁴ He would have also heard as much from the Continental churchmen and visitors attendant at his court.¹⁰⁵ Considering the strong tradition of fostering an association with Rome and the Church for dynastic reasons, it is not surprising then that Alfred's children and grandchildren followed the path taken by their forebears.

Alfred's coinage, like his attitude toward the Church, reflects his ability to intertwine the practical and the symbolic. Alfred and his heirs effectively

¹⁰³ Abels, *Alfred the Great*, 243-6.

¹⁰⁴ See Chapter 3, 61-63.

¹⁰⁵ Wickham, *The Inheritance of Rome: A History of Europe from 400 to 1000*, 460-3.

expanded the minting of coin across England as part of their system of *burhs*.¹⁰⁶

In the most practical of terms, this process was intended to generate income for the realm and to stimulate trade. Ever aware of the power of the symbolic, however, Alfred went beyond simply expanding minting and reforming the coinage and commissioned special issues of coins from the Mercian mints of London, Gloucester, and Oxford to celebrate his taking control of the region.¹⁰⁷ Alfred's coinage also reveals his appreciation for the Roman past and his understanding the power and prestige it conveyed. His *Two Emperors* type was far more carefully copied from their prototype and more artfully executed than other issues of this type, and they bore the title *Rex Anglorum*.¹⁰⁸ Alfred's *Two Emperors* coins were announcing his ascendancy from king of Wessex to the king of the English using the imagery of the Roman past.

Coins were not the only treasures that the West Saxons distributed for political purposes, Alfred and his heirs also sought to augment the symbolic power of the churches and religious houses in their towns and to appropriate saintly authority and reputation for themselves through the acquisition and donation of relics. Edward the Elder acquired the remains of the Breton saint, Judoc, for New Minster and encouraged the veneration of his father's advisor Grimbold who he had enshrined there.¹⁰⁹ Æthelflaed retrieved the body of

¹⁰⁶ Blackburn, "Alfred the Great," 207-8.

¹⁰⁷ Blackburn, "Alfred the Great," 205-8.

¹⁰⁸ M. A. S. Blackburn, "The London Mint in the Reign of King Alfred," in M. A. S. Blackburn and D. N. Dumville (eds.), *Kings, Currency, and Alliances : History and Coinage of Southern England in the Ninth Century*, Studies in Anglo-Saxon History, 9 (1998), x, 259 p., at 116-9, Blackburn, "Alfred the Great," 207.

¹⁰⁹ Alan Thacker, "Dynastic Monasteries and Family Cults: Edward the Elder's Sainted Kindred," in N. H. Higham, David (ed.), *Edward the Elder 899-924* (2001), 248-63, at 253.

Oswald, saint and king, from Bardney and donated it to the new foundation of St. Oswald's at Gloucester in 909.¹¹⁰ Æthelflaed may have also been the force behind the translations of the bodies of St. Waerburh to Chester and St. Alkmund to Shrewsbury.¹¹¹ These acquisitions were most certainly intended to elevate the status of the Æthelflaedian foundations, their patrons, and by extension their towns.¹¹² Gloucester's lavishly appointed church and its famous royal saint must have radiated the power and prestige of the new rulers of the region and their town. Æthelflaed and Æthelred must have been pleased with the result of their efforts and, as Carolyn Heighway has stated, "It is surely a statement of their regard for the town that both the founders of St. Oswalds were buried at Gloucester, in the church which they had founded."¹¹³

The *Exeter Relic-List* reveals Alfred's grandson, Æthelstan's zeal in obtaining relics for the house he founded there.¹¹⁴ The Relic-List attributes 146 relics at Exeter to Æthelstan.¹¹⁵ In its preamble, the list states that the donations were made to praise God and the king, and that God sent the notion to Æthelstan "that with perishable treasure he could obtain imperishable ones."¹¹⁶ The role-models for Æthelstan's activities at Exeter were most

¹¹⁰ Thacker, "Chester and Gloucester: Early Ecclesiastical Organization in Two Mercian Burhs," at 209.

¹¹¹ Thacker, "Chester and Gloucester: Early Ecclesiastical Organization in Two Mercian Burhs," at 211.

¹¹² D. W. Rollason, "Relic-Cults as an Instrument of Royal Policy C.900-C.1050," *Anglo-Saxon England*, 15 (1986), 91-104, at 91-3.

¹¹³ Heighway, "Gloucester and the New Minster of St. Oswald," 108.

¹¹⁴ *The Exeter Relic-List*, ed. P. W. Conner (Woodbridge, Suffolk, UK; Rochester, NY, 1993), 177-87.

¹¹⁵ *ERL*, 177-87.

¹¹⁶ *ERL*, 177.

certainly Æthelflaed and her husband Æthelred who fostered him as child.¹¹⁷ Æthelstan must have witnessed first-hand the splendor of St. Oswald's at Gloucester and the power it projected and been inspired by it. Æthelstan, as Alan Thacker has argued, had a "comprehensive understanding of the ways in which the cult of saints could be put to the service of the new West Saxon state."¹¹⁸

The translation of the body of Saint Swithun in 971 marked a high point in the West Saxon kings' patronage of the religious houses of their *burhs* and a sort of royal reconciliation for Old Minster.¹¹⁹ According to Wulfstan of Winchester's account of the translation, King Edgar had a reliquary built for the saint from three hundred pounds of silver, a number of rubies, and gold—an extraordinarily generous gift and one that was sure to reflect the power of its benefactor. We also know that Saint Swithun's translation inaugurated a great renovation and expansion of Old Minster that was supported by both Edgar and Æthelred. A renovation that would make Old Minster a monument, not only to God's glory, but also to that of the West Saxon kings who were its patrons.¹²⁰

Alfred and his heirs blending of Roman, Continental and English traditions with regards to their urban churches aligns well with what we know of Alfred's practices in other areas. Alfred's filled his court with not only English but also Welsh and Continental advisors.¹²¹ Simon Keynes has argued

¹¹⁷ Thacker, "Dynastic Monasteries and Family Cults," 255-6.

¹¹⁸ Thacker, "Dynastic Monasteries and Family Cults," 256.

¹¹⁹ Wulfstan of Winchester, *Narratio Metrica De S. Swithvno*, ed. M. Lapidge (Oxford, 2003), 492. Hereafter NM.

¹²⁰ Thacker, "Dynastic Monasteries and Family Cults," 253.

¹²¹ Abels, *Alfred the Great*, 222-6.

that Alfred may have relied on a “West Saxon tradition of ‘pragmatic’ literacy in Latin and the vernacular” in addition to Continental resources to foster his program of literary revival.¹²² Alfred’s laws were influenced by Germanic, Roman, and Christian views.¹²³ His military reforms built on a combination of existing and innovative practices.¹²⁴ Above all, Alfred as king utilized whatever tool, be it material or ideological, at his disposal to push his policies forward. It is not surprising then, that Alfred and his heirs recognized both the practical and the symbolic value of incorporating churches into their *burhs*.

In the sixth and seventh centuries, Augustine and his companions in the Gregorian Mission sought to appropriate Britain’s Roman and Christian past for themselves and the Church of Rome by reclaiming the former Roman towns as the setting for their churches. For the early bishops, the churches they built in turn restored the status of their towns. Three centuries later, Alfred and his heirs understood that the churches and the religious houses in their *burhs* were critical, both economically and symbolically, to their transformation into actual towns. Through the incorporation and foundation of churches and religious houses at their *burhs* and the translation of saints to those churches, Alfred and his heirs were similarly appropriating both the Roman and the Christian pasts for themselves and their new towns. By the tenth century, the bishops and the cathedral communities of London, Winchester, and Worcester found themselves living side by side with the new secular populations and the

¹²² Simon Keynes, “The Power of the Written Word: Alfredian England 871-899,” in T. Reuter (ed.), *Alfred the Great: Papers from the Eleventh-Century Conferences*, Studies in Early Medieval Britain 3(2003), 175-98, at 188-9.

¹²³ Wormald, *The Making of English Law: King Alfred to the Twelfth Century*, 106-25, 265-85.

¹²⁴ Abels, *Alfred the Great*, 194-200.

Romanitas and the prestige conveyed by their residence within the former Roman towns and their association with the Gregorian Mission could now be claimed by King Alfred, his children, their royal agents, and even the common *burhwaru* of the new towns.

6. Reconnected: Craft Production, Trade, and Towns in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries

At the start of the eleventh century, a number of towns in England were beginning to reach a state of economic complexity that had not been seen in Britain since the decline of the great emporia a century and a half earlier. The craft production and trade taking place in early eleventh-century London, Winchester, Southampton, and York was on par with that of eighth- and ninth-century *Lundenwic*, *Hamwic*, or *Eforwic*, and the growing secular populations and the multifaceted economic systems of the later towns closely resembled those of the defunct emporia. In order for these towns to reach this state of commercial development it was necessary to recreate or revive the basic elements that made the emporia successful: a core population of craftsmen and traders within the town; regional trade networks to support and supply this population; cross-Channel trade networks to provide access to Continental markets and supply foreign goods; and, finally, royal and elite mechanisms to protect, foster, and—to make protecting and fostering important to kings and potentates—exploit trade.

The parallels between the eleventh-century towns and the eighth- and ninth-century emporia did not happen unintentionally, they were the

product of a century and a half of efforts by kings, elites, craftsmen, and traders to try to recreate the economic vitality of the emporia within the new model of the walled town. In the south and the Midlands, the fortified towns or *burhs* established by Alfred the Great and his heirs, were not only intended to emulate Roman and Continental towns but also to reestablish the complex economic mechanisms of the emporia that dotted England's riverbanks and coasts during the eighth and ninth centuries. Alfred and his heirs, it seems, did not look exclusively to the Roman past or to the Continent for exemplars when planning and developing their towns, they also looked back to the profitable trading towns that, although clearly declining, still existed in England as late as the reign of Alfred's father, Æthelwulf. *Lundenwic*, *Hamwic*, *Eforwic*, and the numerous smaller emporia that thrived during the eighth and early ninth centuries provided the English kings with a known model for organizing and exploiting craft production and trade.

In the north and east, York and the other towns that were outside the control of the English kings for much of the late ninth and early tenth centuries were subject to the influence of Scandinavian rulers and English bishops who were also keen to reap the benefits afforded by holding sway over an active trading center.¹ The northern orientations of the Cross-channel trade networks of the towns in the Danelaw reflect the associations of the Scandinavian rulers and settlers in those regions. The rulers who encouraged the growth of these

¹ R. A. Hall, "Anglo-Scandinavian Urban Development in the East Midlands," in J. Graham-Campbell (ed.), *Vikings and the Danelaw: Select Papers from the Proceedings of the Thirteenth Viking Congress, Nottingham and York, 21-30 August 1997* (2001), 143-55, at 152-3.

towns may actually have been imitating the town-building activities of the English kings just as they did with the minting of coin.²

The efforts of kings and elites to build economically viable towns during the tenth and eleventh centuries required the participation, willing or otherwise, of tens of thousands of craftsmen and traders. Significant populations of craftsmen and traders were a trait shared by both the eleventh-century towns and the earlier emporia. Indeed, most of the tenth- and eleventh-century inhabitants of London, Winchester, Southampton, and York made their livings in the very same ways that most people had in the pre-viking emporia, practicing a variety of crafts and trading regional and international goods. Moreover, the archaeological evidence indicates that the craftsmen and traders living in England's towns during the late tenth and eleventh centuries far outnumbered the clerical and secular elites living alongside them—even in the royal and ecclesiastical enclaves of London and Winchester. An examination of the growing secular populations, the expanding settlement areas, and the street patterns of the tenth- and eleventh-century towns reveal that they were very similar to those of the earlier emporia.

Eleventh-century London, like eighth-century *Lundenwic*, was the leading town of its day.³ During the late tenth and early eleventh centuries, the population within London's walls grew steadily and there is evidence for

² Mark Blackburn, "Aspects of Anglo-Scandinavian Minting South of the Humber," in J. Graham-Campbell (ed.), *Vikings and the Danelaw: Select Papers from the Proceedings of the Thirteenth Viking Congress, Nottingham and York, 21-30 August 1997* (2001), 125-42, at 128-32; Mark Blackburn, "The Coinage of Scandinavian York," in R. A. Hall (ed.), *Aspects of Anglo-Scandinavian York* (2004), 325-49, at 327-9.

³ Burch, Treveil and Keene, *Early Medieval and Later Poultry and Cheapside*, 201.

increasing craft production and trade.⁴ The secular populace of late tenth- and eleventh-century London looked very much like that of *Lundenwic* at its height. The smiths, leatherworkers, antler, bone, and horn workers, cloth workers, and traders living in the walled town had, if nothing else, an occupational connection to the prior inhabitants of the abandoned emporium on the Strand.⁵ Beyond the shared vocations of their inhabitants, *Lundenwic* and the secular settlement within the walled town of London also developed geographically in very similar ways.

The River Thames was the main artery of both the eleventh-century walled town of London and eighth- and ninth-century *Lundenwic*, a fact reflected by the development of the streets and neighborhoods of both settlements. The repopulation of Alfred's London began along the "trading shore" of the Thames in an area then known as Æthelred's *hythe*, modern Queenhithe, and spread north and east.⁶ The earliest streets of the "restored" town ran from the Thames waterfront in the south to Cheapside or East Cheap in the North.⁷ This pattern mirrors the layout of *Lundenwic*'s streets, which

⁴ Valerie Horsman, Christine Milne and Gustav Milne, *Building and Street Development near Billingsgate and Cheapside* (London, 1988), 115-6, Burch, Treveil and Keene, *Early Medieval and Later Poultry and Cheapside*, 172, 94.

⁵ Burch, Treveil and Keene, *Early Medieval and Later Poultry and Cheapside*, 215-24, 27-30, Malcolm, Bowsher and Cowie, *Middle Saxon London*, 168-84.

⁶ Wroe-Brown, "The Saxon Origins of Queenhithe," at 13-6, Burch, Treveil and Keene, *Early Medieval and Later Poultry and Cheapside*, 174.

⁷ Horsman, Milne and Milne, *Building and Street Development near Billingsgate and Cheapside*, 115-6, Burch, Treveil and Keene, *Early Medieval and Later Poultry and Cheapside*, 173-8, Ken Steedman, Tony Dyson and John Schofield, *The Bridgehead and Billingsgate to 1200* (London, 1992), 122-31.

ran north from the waterfront to the Strand and then continued on to the old Roman road, modern Oxford Street.⁸

As each town became more densely populated, space within heart of the growing towns became scarce. Over time, building plots became more valuable and both eighth-century *Lundenwic* and eleventh-century London saw formerly open areas between buildings and at the margins of the settlements developed.⁹ Land formerly used for waste disposal or cultivation was built-up to accommodate the growing number of craftsmen and traders who lived and worked along the primary streets of each settlement. During the early tenth century, the area around Poultry and Bucklersbury Street was a marginal area used for the dumping of waste from the older, more densely populated area to the west and only came to be developed during late tenth and early eleventh centuries as the settlement expanded eastward.¹⁰

Buildings and waste pits uncovered during excavations in the vicinity of Poultry and Bucklersbury have produced evidence for intensive craft production in the walled town during the tenth and eleventh centuries.¹¹ Evidence for ironworking and smithing from at least the early eleventh century, and likely earlier, was recovered from several properties that fronted Poultry and from the north side of Bucklersbury.¹² The smithy or smithies on Poultry, as with the ones at *Lundenwic*, were well located on a main route across the settlement to

⁸ Malcolm, Bowsher and Cowie, *Middle Saxon London*, 145-7.

⁹ Leary and Brown, *Tatberht's Lundenwic: Archaeological Excavations in Middle Saxon London*, 142.

¹⁰ Burch, Treveil and Keene, *Early Medieval and Later Poultry and Cheapside*, 20-3, 32-56.

¹¹ Burch, Treveil and Keene, *Early Medieval and Later Poultry and Cheapside*, 215-27.

¹² Burch, Treveil and Keene, *Early Medieval and Later Poultry and Cheapside*, 223-4.

serve travelers coming and going from the town.¹³ Excavations at both settlements have also produced evidence for nonferrous metal working as well, including crucibles and copper-alloy waste.¹⁴

Leatherworking is another activity that was shared by the populations of the tenth- and eleventh-century London and *Lundenwic*. Large amounts of leather scrap, waste leather, and pieces of worn shoes were also recovered from what was an open area to west of Bucklersbury, indicating that leather was being worked, new shoes were being produced, and old shoes were being repaired by the craftsmen living in the vicinity of Poultry and Bucklersbury.¹⁵ Due to soil conditions, no leather has survived from *Lundenwic*, however, we know that leatherworking took place there as tanning pits, tanning waste, and a few leatherworking tools have been found at sites within the emporium.¹⁶ No doubt, the shoemakers of eleventh-century London were also tanning hides or being supplied by local tanners working at other, as yet undiscovered, sites within the walled town. Either arrangement would fit well with what we know of leatherworking during this period; as the shoemaker states in Ælfric's colloquy, "I buy hides and skins and prepare them with my craft."¹⁷

Sawn antler and horn cores from both cattle and goats were recovered from the excavations at 1 Poultry Street and also from cesspits in the vicinity.¹⁸

¹³ Burch, Treveil and Keene, *Early Medieval and Later Poultry and Cheapside*, 223-4, Malcolm, Bowsher and Cowie, *Middle Saxon London*, 175-7.

¹⁴ Burch, Treveil and Keene, *Early Medieval and Later Poultry and Cheapside*, 227-9.

¹⁵ Burch, Treveil and Keene, *Early Medieval and Later Poultry and Cheapside*, 215-7, Malcolm, Bowsher and Cowie, *Middle Saxon London*, 179-80.

¹⁶ Malcolm, Bowsher and Cowie, *Middle Saxon London*, 182-4.

¹⁷ Ælfric, *Ælfric's Colloquy*, ed. G. N. Garmonsway (Exeter, 1991), 34-5.

¹⁸ Burch, Treveil and Keene, *Early Medieval and Later Poultry and Cheapside*, 221-3.

This type of waste indicates that antler, bone, and horn were being prepped for finishing in this area—likely for use in the production of combs and handles—in much the same way they had been at *Lundenwic*.¹⁹ Comb making had been an important craft at the emporium and both complete and partial combs have been recovered from a number of *Lundenwic* sites.²⁰ The close proximity of horn working and leatherworking in the eleventh-century town was a practical arrangement as both crafts relied on the same sources of raw materials, and it parallels the nearness of horn working and tanning at *Lundenwic*.²¹

Evidence for cloth production has also been recovered, albeit on a somewhat limited scale, from the Poultry/Bucklersbury area in the form of loom weights, spindle whorls, and pin beaters; suggesting that spinning and weaving were being performed on a domestic scale.²² Although more widespread, the evidence for textile production at *Lundenwic* also reflects that it had also taken place alongside other crafts in homes or workshops.²³

Taken collectively, the evidence from the Poultry and Bucklersbury area suggests that eleventh-century London was home to a growing population of craftsmen who derived their livings from many of the same crafts that had been practiced in the emporium along the Strand two hundred years earlier. Both towns, it appears, expanded outward from a water-front core with

¹⁹ Burch, Treveil and Keene, *Early Medieval and Later Poultry and Cheapside*, 221, Malcolm, Bowsher and Cowie, *Middle Saxon London*, 170-5.

²⁰ Riddler, "Production in Lundenwic: Antler, Bone and Horn Working," 145-8, 84.

²¹ Malcolm, Bowsher and Cowie, *Middle Saxon London*, 182.

²² Burch, Treveil and Keene, *Early Medieval and Later Poultry and Cheapside*, 218-21.

²³ Malcolm, Bowsher and Cowie, *Middle Saxon London*, 168-70.

intramural and peripheral areas being built-up and converted to living and working space as their populations increased.²⁴ By the eleventh century, the secular inhabitants of the walled town of London were living and working in a settlement area defined by the Thames to the south and the main east-west routes to the old Roman Roads in the north—just as the craftsmen and traders of *Lundenwic* had two centuries earlier and one hundred or so meters to the west.

Winchester, like London, was major town by the beginning of the eleventh century and excavations at Winchester have produced ample evidence for intensive craft production, including iron working, spinning, cloth production, and antler and bone working during this period.²⁵ As at London, the main streets of eleventh-century Winchester—having long been subdivided into small plots—were densely settled and lined with the tenements, workshops, warehouses of craftsmen and traders.²⁶ Most of these craftsmen and traders were of low to middle economic status but a few, such as those who lived on the east side of Brudene Street, were clearly better off.²⁷ Excavations at the properties on the east side of Brudene Street have produced some of the more high-end items recovered in the area, including French pottery, a decorated bone spatula, a casket mount, a stylus, a number of locks and keys, and balances that may have been used to weigh coin.²⁸

²⁴ Malcolm, Bowsher and Cowie, *Middle Saxon London*, 145-8, Burch, Treveil and Keene, *Early Medieval and Later Poultry and Cheapside*, 170, 3-6.

²⁵ Ford and Teague, *Winchester a City in the Making*, 200-7.

²⁶ Ford and Teague, *Winchester a City in the Making*, 190-4.

²⁷ Ford and Teague, *Winchester a City in the Making*, 207.

²⁸ Ford and Teague, *Winchester a City in the Making*, 207.

The refortification of the town in the ninth century and the founding of two major religious houses, New Minster and Nunnaminster, during the tenth century must have spurred economic activity in Winchester.²⁹ There has also long been speculation that some of the craft production which had formerly taken place at *Hamwic* was relocated to Winchester and, interestingly, the town saw a spike in population during the late ninth century, just as *Hamwic* was declining.³⁰ Simply based on its location, Winchester's craftsmen must have exchanged goods with some of the same rural settlements that had ties to *Hamwic* in the preceding centuries. By the tenth century, moreover, Winchester had also emerged as an important West Saxon mint, supplying the region formerly served by the moneyers who had resided at *Hamwic*.³¹

Southampton, like Winchester, can also be seen as a successor to *Hamwic*.³² It appears that the functions formerly performed by *Hamwic* were split between Winchester and Southampton after the emporium's demise, with inland Winchester absorbing its administrative role and some of its craft production and Southampton adopting its port status. Southampton in the eleventh century was a growing secondary port-town and it may have acted as the maritime *entrepot* for Winchester.³³ Just a short distance from the former site of *Hamwic*, Southampton was intended to be a more defensible off-loading

²⁹ Biddle and Keene, "The Late Saxon Burh," 449-69.

³⁰ Morton, Davies and Andrews, *Excavations at Hamwic*, , 75, Ford and Teague, *Winchester a City in the Making*, 222.

³¹ Blackburn, "Alfred the Great," 208-12.

³² Morton, Davies and Andrews, *Excavations at Hamwic*, , 70-7, Andrews, *Excavations at Hamwic: Volume 2 Excavations at Six Dials*, 255-6.

³³ Ford and Teague, *Winchester a City in the Making*, 222.

point for boats making call at the Southampton Waters.³⁴ The links between *Hamwic* and Southampton went well beyond proximity and the replication of some of its economic functions, the continued use of St. Mary's churchyard as burial site in the tenth and eleventh centuries displays a continuity of religious and mortuary practices between the populations of the two settlements.³⁵

Anglo-Scandinavian York —*Jorvik*—also saw a marked increase in craft production during the tenth century, a phenomenon that R.A. Hall has stated “points to a ‘boom town’ economy.”³⁶ This “boom town” economy was built upon a resurgence of much the same type of craft production that had formerly taken place at the eighth- and ninth-century emporium at Fishergate—*Eoforwic*. The evidence for this upturn in craft production comes from the Coppergate neighborhood to the north of the Fishergate area.³⁷ The crafts identified at Coppergate were comparable to those undertaken earlier at Fishergate; iron Working; non-ferrous metalworking; wood working; leather working; antler, bone, and horn working; and textile production.³⁸ The

³⁴ Colin Platt, *Medieval Southampton; the Port and Trading Community, A.D. 1000-1600* (London, 1973), 1. this page number need to be fixed!

³⁵ Annia Cherryson, “Such a Resting-Place as Is Necessary for Us in God's Sight and Fitting in the Eyes of the World': Saxon Southampton and the Development of Churchyard Burial,” in J. Buckberry and A. Cherryson (eds.), *Burial in Later Anglo-Saxon England C. 650-1100 AD* (2010), 54-72, at 60-9.

³⁶ R. A. Hall, “Afterword,” in R. A. Hall, Y. A. Trust and C. f. B. Archaeology (eds.), *Aspects of Anglo-Scandinavian York* (2004), 498-502, at 499.

³⁷ Ailsa Mainman and Nicola Rogers, “Craft and Economy in Anglo-Scandinavian York,” in R. A. Hall, Y. A. Trust and C. f. B. Archaeology (eds.), *Aspects of Anglo-Scandinavian York* (2004), 459-83, at 476-83.

³⁸ Mainman and Rogers, “Craft and Economy in Anglo-Scandinavian York,” 464, Nicola S. H. Rogers, York Archaeological Trust. and Council for British Archaeology., *Anglian and Other Finds from 46-54 Fishergate* (London, 1993), 1441-3.

intensive nature of the craft production that occurred at Coppergate is indicative of a general resurgence in commercial activity at York.³⁹

Although York was nominally under the control of the English kings during the second half of the tenth century, the most direct influence on the town was that of the archbishop.⁴⁰ It may have been the archbishops, particularly Oswald who held both Worcester and York after 871, who fostered the resurgence of craft production at York during this period.⁴¹ If his activities at Worcester are any indication, it is highly probable the Oswald would have also sought to improve the economic situation of the cathedral town of his northern see.⁴² It is also possible that the earls appointed by the king encouraged craft production and trade at York or that it reemerged organically in response to a period of greater stability.⁴³

Less significant towns such as Oxford and Worcester also saw the advent of craft production within their walls during the tenth and eleventh centuries. The archaeological evidence from Oxford indicates that Iron working, antler and bone working, tanning, leather working, and textile production were all taking place within the new *burh* during the tenth and eleventh centuries.⁴⁴

Evidence suggest that flax retting was taking place in wattle-lined gullies and

³⁹ Hall, "Afterword," 499.

⁴⁰ David Rollason, "Anglo-Scandinavian York: The Evidence of Historical Sources," in R. A. Hall, Y. A. Trust and C. f. B. Archaeology (eds.), *Aspects of Anglo-Scandinavian York* (2004), 305-24, at 313-4.

⁴¹ Hall, "Afterword," 500.

⁴² Nigel Baker and Richard Holt, "The City of Worcester in the Tenth Century," in N. Brooks and C. Cubitt (eds.), *St. Oswald of Worcester: Life and Influence* (1996), 129-46, at 138-46.

⁴³ Rollason, "Anglo-Scandinavian York: The Evidence of Historical Sources," 314-6, Hall, "Afterword," 501.

⁴⁴ Anne Dodd, Maureen Mellor, Leigh Allen, Luke Adams and Oxford Archaeological Unit, *Oxford before the University: The Late Saxon and Norman Archaeology of the Thames Crossing, the Defences and the Town* (Oxford, 2003), 42-4.

channels at the Thames crossing sites, as part of the production of linen cloth, and that wool may have also been processed in the area.⁴⁵ Oxford's location at a busy crossing point on the Thames made it a logical place for industry and trade to develop.

Worcester also saw the advent of a population of craftsmen after it was refortified. The excavations from Deansway in Worcester have revealed evidence that craftsmen were settling within its walls during the tenth century.⁴⁶ Iron smiths, tanners, and leather workers all lived in the Deansway area during the tenth and eleventh centuries.⁴⁷ There are indications that Worcester benefitted from its role as a hub for the distribution of salt from Droitwich. A late ninth-century charter of Ealdorman Æthelred and Æthelfaed granted the church at Worcester half of their rights to the tolls on salt within the *burh* with the exception of the "wagon-shilling" taken at Droitwich which belonged to the king.⁴⁸ This arrangement would seem to indicate a persistence or renewal of an earlier apparatus aimed at exploiting the Droitwich salt trade for royal benefit.⁴⁹

The evidence for craft production during the late tenth and early eleventh centuries indicates that the towns of England were participating not in an economic and industrial revolution but in an economic and industrial revival. This was a revival of the economic conditions that had built the

⁴⁵ Dodd, Mellor, Allen, Adams and Unit, *Oxford before the University: The Late Saxon and Norman Archaeology of the Thames Crossing, the Defences and the Town*, 42.

⁴⁶ Dalwood, Edwards and Blades, *Excavations at Deansway, Worcester*, 55-61.

⁴⁷ Dalwood, Edwards and Blades, *Excavations at Deansway, Worcester*, 105-6.

⁴⁸ S, ed. Sawyer, 223, Maddicott, "London and Droitwich," at 41-2.

⁴⁹ Maddicott, "London and Droitwich," at 7-33.

emporia. During the tenth and eleventh centuries, the fortified towns founded by Alfred and his heirs provided a relatively safe environment for people to live and work in and this allowed large communities of craftsmen and traders to coalesce in one place as they had at *Hamwic*, *Lundenwic*, and *Eoforwic* during the course of the sixth to the ninth centuries. The number and geographic distribution of the *burhs* founded by Alfred and his heirs also provided opportunities for smaller communities of craftsmen and traders to develop in places that had not previously been home to these types of communities, such as Worcester and Oxford.⁵⁰

A safe environment in which craftsmen and their families could live and work was key factor in promoting intensive craft production. Recent research has suggested that, contrary to older hypotheses, most craftsmen were sedentary rather than itinerant and that craft production on any type of scale would have required the type of organization found primarily on urban sites. Ian Riddler and Nicola Trzaska-Nartowski have argued that Anglo-Saxon comb-makers, that is craftsmen who worked antler, bone and horn, set-up shop in one place and worked at different aspects of their craft year-round.⁵¹ This is based on the recovery of waste materials at the same sites in *Hamwic*, Ipswich, and *Lundenwic* across successive phases of excavation, some of which were more than fifty years in duration.⁵² The location of antler, bone and horn

⁵⁰ For a list of burh sites see Hill, "Gazetteer," 189-231.

⁵¹ Ian Riddler and Nicola Trzaska-Nartowski, "Chanting Upon a Dunghill: Working Skeletal Materials," in M. C. Hyer, G. R. Owen-Crocker and C. P. Biggam (eds.), *The Material Culture of Daily Living in the Anglo-Saxon World* (2011), 116-41, at 128.

⁵² Riddler and Trzaska-Nartowski, "Chanting Upon a Dunghill: Working Skeletal Materials," 128-30.

workers in towns also gave them ample access to the materials they worked, via the trade for antler and from the butchering of animals to provision the towns and from the preparation of skins by neighboring tanners for bone and horn.

David Hinton has also suggested that the evidence for the production of blades and shields in towns suggests “a trend away from itinerant weaponsmiths travelling with kings and great lords to sedentary, urban specialization.”⁵³ The archaeological evidence from the emporia and the later walled towns suggests that there were large numbers of smiths permanently settled amongst their inhabitants.⁵⁴

The craftsmen and traders of the eleventh-century towns of England were part of a resurgent economy which developed to supply the expanding conspicuous consumption of status-conscious Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Scandinavian elites. As Robin Fleming has shown, landholding elites, from over-reaching *thegns* to earls and kings, were reorganizing their lands to be as productive as possible during the ninth, tenth, and eleventh centuries.⁵⁵ Motivating this drive for productivity was a desire to generate as much coin as possible to purchase visible markers of social status, including locally-made or

⁵³ David Hinton, “Weland’s Work: Metals and Metalsmithing,” in M. C. Hyer, G. R. Owen-Crocker and C. P. Biggam (eds.), *The Material Culture of Daily Living in the Anglo-Saxon World* (2011), 185-200, at 194.

⁵⁴ Malcolm, Bowsher and Cowie, *Middle Saxon London*, 175-6, Burch, Treveil and Keene, *Early Medieval and Later Poultry and Cheapside*, 223, 314, Andrews, *Excavations at Hamwic: Volume 2 Excavations at Six Dials*, 222-6.

⁵⁵ Robin Fleming, “The New Wealth, the New Rich and the New Political Style in Late Saxon England” *Anglo-Norman Studies*, XXIII (2000), 1-22, at 1-3.

imported finery, exotic foods, and wine.⁵⁶ The towns of the tenth and eleventh centuries were the mechanism that transformed this surplus agricultural produce into coin and finished goods—in much the same way that the major emporia had been in the eighth century.

This phenomenon can be seen in the patterns of coin loss for *Lundenwic*/London from the eighth to eleventh centuries, which is a good indication of the amount of coin in circulation over that time-span. The individual coin finds from *Lundenwic*/London indicate a high level of coin loss during the first half of the eighth century, followed by a steady decline in coin loss beginning in the second half of the eighth century— the period that coincides with the beginning of the decline of the emporium— and finally culminating in a sharp increase in losses beginning in the late tenth century as the walled town was reaching a point of economic maturity.⁵⁷

The economic and industrial revival that took place during the tenth and eleventh centuries required a corresponding renewal of regional and cross-Channel communication and trade networks. The redevelopment of regional trade networks was necessary to meet the needs of both the inhabitants of the tenth and eleventh century towns and the landholding elites. For the craftsmen of the towns, these networks supplied food and raw materials and for the elites, whose lands were the source of the agricultural produce, these networks supplied coin and finished goods. The corresponding renewal of

⁵⁶ Fleming, "The New Wealth," at 3-15.

⁵⁷ Blackburn, "'Productive Sites' and the Pattern of Coin Loss," 32-4.

cross-Channel networks provided wider markets for English commodities, such as wool, and access to desired foreign goods both exotic and mundane.

The patterns of provisioning and consumption for London, Winchester, and York during the tenth and eleventh centuries look remarkably similar to those of the eighth-century emporia and illustrate the strong connections between urban craftsmen and their rural neighbors during both periods. Adult cattle were the principal source of meat for the populations of tenth- and eleventh-century London, Winchester, and York as they had been for inhabitants of the eighth-century emporia.⁵⁸ Lamb and pork also figured in the urban diet to varying degrees during the eighth century and again at the turn of the millennium.⁵⁹ The majority of the cattle and sheep/goats came from the hinterlands of the tenth- and eleventh-century towns with only small percentage being raised locally, exactly how the earlier emporia were provisioned.⁶⁰ The presence of neonatal pigs in the assemblages for both *Lundenwic* and later London indicate that some of the pork was raised locally at both settlements, but outside sources may have also supplied a percentage of what was consumed.⁶¹

The bulk of the wheat and other grains consumed or used for brewing or fodder by the inhabitants of the tenth- and eleventh-century towns also came

⁵⁸ Burch, Treveil and Keene, *Early Medieval and Later Poultry and Cheapside*, 204-12.

⁵⁹ Burch, Treveil and Keene, *Early Medieval and Later Poultry and Cheapside*, 204-10.

⁶⁰ Burch, Treveil and Keene, *Early Medieval and Later Poultry and Cheapside*, 210-2, Malcolm, Bowsher and Cowie, *Middle Saxon London*, 161-2, Ulmschneider, *Markets, Minsters, and Metal-Detectors: The Archaeology of Middle Saxon Lincolnshire and Hampshire Compared*, 52.

⁶¹ Burch, Treveil and Keene, *Early Medieval and Later Poultry and Cheapside*, 208-9, Malcolm, Bowsher and Cowie, *Middle Saxon London*, 185.

from the estates of regional elites.⁶² Comparisons of the cereal assemblages from tenth- and eleventh-century Winchester and eighth- and ninth-century *Hamwic* have revealed that, at both settlements, much of the grain recovered was processed before arriving at the towns.⁶³ This indicates that the population of Winchester had arrangements with their grain suppliers that were similar, at least in regard to the preparation of the crop for delivery, to those that the earlier inhabitants of *Hamwic* had with their rural contemporaries.

The tenth- and eleventh-century English pottery recovered from London, Winchester, Oxford, Worcester, and York is also indicative of active and complex regional trade networks that were similar to those of the earlier emporia. The tenth- and eleventh-century pottery recovered from London shows that it was once again the central node in a network that extended from the Channel coast up the Thames valley to Oxford and beyond. Late Saxon shelly ware is the most common type of pottery recovered from the late-ninth to mid-eleventh-century layers at excavated sites in London.⁶⁴ The Late Saxon shelly ware from London is comparable in type and form to Oxford shelly ware, which was probably produced in Oxfordshire to the west of the town of Oxford and was widely distributed throughout the Thames valley, particularly south of the river, during the tenth and early eleventh centuries.⁶⁵ Oxford ware was also in common use at the West Saxon founded town of Wallingford during this

⁶² Burch, Treveil and Keene, *Early Medieval and Later Poultry and Cheapside*, 202, Ford and Teague, *Winchester a City in the Making*, 366-8.

⁶³ Ford and Teague, *Winchester a City in the Making*, 367.

⁶⁴ Burch, Treveil and Keene, *Early Medieval and Later Poultry and Cheapside*, 271-4.

⁶⁵ Paul Blinkhorn, "One Size Doesn't Fit All: Pottery Use, Identity and Cultural Practice in Early Medieval Oxford, AD 900 - 1100", presented at *Theoretical Archaeology Group* (Durham, 2009), 2.

period indicating that they shared a pattern of ceramic use and, possibly, provisioning with London.⁶⁶ When taken together, Late Saxon shelly ware and Oxford ware may represent a distinctly West Saxon pottery tradition that is indicative of a shared sense of identity between the three towns.⁶⁷

Sherds of Ipswich/Thetford type wares have also been recovered from tenth- and eleventh-century contexts at London.⁶⁸ The presence of Ipswich/Thetford ware suggests that, despite earlier speculation to the contrary, the populations of tenth- and eleventh-century London had ties to potters in East Anglia which echoed *Lundenwic*'s connections to the pottery industry at Ipswich.⁶⁹ The Ipswich/Thetford ware users present in tenth- and eleventh-century London may have been foreigners from outside the immediate region or, perhaps, locals who maintained an earlier affinity for Ipswich/Thetford type pots.

St. Neots ware, most likely produced in the vicinity of the later town of the same name in Cambridgeshire, has also been recovered in relatively small amounts from tenth- and early-eleventh-century layers in London and Oxford.⁷⁰ The use of St. Neots ware by a small subset of the population in tenth- and eleventh-century London or Oxford indicates that they had a different set of connections and, most likely, a different tradition of pottery use. While, St.

⁶⁶ Blinkhorn, "One Size Doesn't Fit All: Pottery Use, Identity and Cultural Practice in Early Medieval Oxford, AD 900 - 1100", 2.

⁶⁷ Blinkhorn, "One Size Doesn't Fit All: Pottery Use, Identity and Cultural Practice in Early Medieval Oxford, AD 900 - 1100", 2.

⁶⁸ Burch, Treveil and Keene, *Early Medieval and Later Poultry and Cheapside*, 271.

⁶⁹ Blackmore and Megan, "The Pottery," 234-5.

⁷⁰ Duncan Brown, "Bound by Tradition: A Study of Pottery in Anglo-Saxon England," *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History*, 12 (2003), 21-7, at 25-6.

Neots was common in Oxfordshire and the midlands during the tenth century, it was somewhat scarce in the town of Oxford before 1015 and the people that used it tended to live on the periphery of the town.⁷¹ The users of St. Neots ware may represent a subgroup in both towns that identified with a Mercian or “Danish” culture, or as Paul Blinkhorn suggests, a “Mercian urban-dweller” culture that was hybridization of both.⁷²

Much of the tenth and eleventh century pottery recovered at Winchester was produced fairly locally.⁷³ The one local ware recovered at Winchester which has a definitively identifiable source is Michelmersh ware, which was produced approximately eight miles west of the town at Michelmersh, Hampshire.⁷⁴ Chalk-tempered wares, the most common pottery type recovered at Winchester for the period from circa 850 to circa 1150, were also common in *Hamwic* from approximately 750 to 850.⁷⁵ The source of these wares is thought to have been to the south of Winchester, approximately fifteen miles north of *Hamwic*.⁷⁶ Once again, it is apparent that tenth- and eleventh-century Winchester was tapping into regional exchange networks that were analogous to those that supported *Hamwic*.

The vast majority— greater than seventy percent—of the pots in use during the tenth and eleventh centuries at Worcester were Cotswold unglazed

⁷¹ Blinkhorn, “One Size Doesn’t Fit All: Pottery Use, Identity and Cultural Practice in Early Medieval Oxford, AD 900 - 1100”, 2-6, Brown, “Bound by Tradition,” at 25-6.

⁷² Ford and Teague, *Winchester a City in the Making*, 340-3, Blinkhorn, “One Size Doesn’t Fit All: Pottery Use, Identity and Cultural Practice in Early Medieval Oxford, AD 900 - 1100”, 4-5, Brown, “Bound by Tradition,” at 25-6.

⁷³ Ford and Teague, *Winchester a City in the Making*, 261-90.

⁷⁴ Ford and Teague, *Winchester a City in the Making*, 264-5, 76-77.

⁷⁵ Ford and Teague, *Winchester a City in the Making*, 276-7.

⁷⁶ Ford and Teague, *Winchester a City in the Making*, 276.

ware, which was produced in the Cotwolds and distributed throughout the lower Severn Valley.⁷⁷ Stafford ware, Stamford type ware, and St. Neots ware collectively made up the other one-third of the pottery sherds recovered from Worcester for this period and were found primarily on elite sites.⁷⁸ The majority of Worcester's population, therefore, was relying on a regionally produced pottery with only the more affluent having access to non-regional wares. This would indicate that Worcester was tied into both regional and long-range trade networks, but that extra-regional goods were only available to those with sufficient means.

At Coppergate in York, most of the pottery used was produced locally with York ware dominating the assemblage until second half of the tenth century when it was replaced during the by more-refined Torksey-type wares.⁷⁹ Torksey-ware appears to have originated at the Torksey kilns in Lincolnshire, but it is believed that was also being produced somewhere in Yorkshire.⁸⁰ Stamford ware was also in use at York during the tenth and eleventh centuries and represents a connection to the *burh* to the south.⁸¹ Local wares, including York ware, also made up the majority of pots in use at the earlier emporium at Fishergate, with Ipswich ware being the most common regional import during the eighth century.⁸² During both periods, the primary sources of York's

⁷⁷ Dalwood, Edwards and Blades, *Excavations at Deansway, Worcester*, 281-7, 307-9, 30-31.

⁷⁸ Dalwood, Edwards and Blades, *Excavations at Deansway, Worcester*, 330-1.

⁷⁹ Mainman and Rogers, "Craft and Economy in Anglo-Scandinavian York," 459-60.

⁸⁰ Brown, "Bound by Tradition," at 24.

⁸¹ Mainman and Rogers, "Craft and Economy in Anglo-Scandinavian York," 459.

⁸² Brown, "Bound by Tradition," at 24.

pottery remained local, but the assemblages also included pots from extra-regional suppliers.

The English pottery recovered from the tenth and eleventh-century towns indicates that that London, Winchester, Southampton, Worcester, York, and Oxford were all well integrated into regional trade networks and participated in regional traditions of pottery use, but owing to their larger populations and wider range of contacts than their rural neighbors, they were also home to a variety of other traditions. The regional contexts of ceramic use and distribution during the tenth and eleventh centuries reflect the political upheaval and cultural shifts of the preceding century.⁸³ London's ties to East Anglia during the tenth and eleventh centuries appear less robust than those of eighth- and ninth-century *Lundenwic*, but its connections to the upper Thames valley were certainly as strong, if not stronger, than those of the earlier emporium. This makes sense for a town positioned at the transitory intersection of the putative West Saxon, Mercian, and Danelaw political and cultural zones. The assemblages from Oxford also display sense of "liminality," although to a lesser extent than London.⁸⁴ Winchester, situated well within undisputed West Saxon territory, was able to retain much the same profile of regional pottery consumption during the tenth and eleventh century as its predecessor, *Hamwic*, displayed a century earlier. Tenth- and eleventh-

⁸³ For a brief overview see Matthew Innes, "Danelaw Identities: Ethnicity, Regionalism, and Political Alliance," in D. M. Hadley and J. D. Richards (eds.), *Cultures in Contact: Scandinavian Settlement in England in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries*, Studies in the Early Middle Ages (2000), 65-88, at 78-85.

⁸⁴ Blinkhorn, "One Size Doesn't Fit All: Pottery Use, Identity and Cultural Practice in Early Medieval Oxford, AD 900 - 1100", 5.

century York appears to have also relied on close regional suppliers for their pots, much as the earlier population at Fishergate had.

The sherds of imported pottery recovered from the tenth- and eleventh-century excavation layers at England's walled towns reveal their trading partners and are indicative of the resurgent Cross-channel networks they were tied into. Again, these networks were similar to those of the earlier emporia but adapted to reflect present political and economic circumstance of the Continent.⁸⁵ At London, the remains of imported pots from the Rhineland, Northern France, and the Low Countries have been recovered.⁸⁶ Small quantities of continental pottery, specifically Continental grey wares and blackwares, have been recovered from sites around the Thames crossing in Oxford.⁸⁷ The recovery of both continental blackwares and Winchester-type pitchers from the same tenth century level at one site, 65 St. Aldate's, has led Maureen Mellor to hypothesize that these Continental wares may have reached Oxford overland from Southampton.⁸⁸ This is quite probable, as imported pottery was relatively rare in Winchester during the tenth and eleventh centuries but was common at Southampton.⁸⁹

⁸⁵ Lebecq and Gautier, "Routeways between England and the Continent in the Tenth Century," 20-30.

⁸⁶ Burch, Treveil and Keene, *Early Medieval and Later Poultry and Cheapside*, 270-3, Lyn Blackmore, "Aspects of Trade and Exchange Evidenced by Recent Work on Saxon and Medieval Pottery from London," *Transactions of the London and Middlesex Archaeological Society*, 50 (1999), 38-54, at 42-4.

⁸⁷ Dodd, Mellor, Allen, Adams and Unit, *Oxford before the University: The Late Saxon and Norman Archaeology of the Thames Crossing, the Defences and the Town*, 44, 292, 4, 5-6.

⁸⁸ Ford and Teague, *Winchester a City in the Making*, 295-6.

⁸⁹ Ford and Teague, *Winchester a City in the Making*, 276-7.

At York, imported pottery was fairly rare from the tenth- and eleventh-century layers at the Coppergate excavations.⁹⁰ This relative absence may be explained by the variety and quality of the regional pottery available. As Duncan Brown has suggested, “the vigour of the Danelaw industries may have led to a reduction in the demand for imported ceramics.”⁹¹ Despite the dearth of imported pottery, other imported materials such as amber and silk have been recovered at Coppergate and reveal York’s connections to the Continent during the tenth and eleventh centuries.⁹² Another indicator of renewed connections with Continent visible at York, as well as London, Winchester, and Oxford, was the return of Mayan lava quernstones.⁹³ Prior to the disruptions of the ninth century, these stones were common at the emporia and were also found on a range of rural sites.⁹⁴

Perhaps the most revealing, and most cited, evidence for renewed cross-Channel trade during the tenth and eleventh centuries is the list of tolls from Billingsgate in London.⁹⁵ It specifies that the men of Rouen were to pay on the wine or fish they brought there for sale.⁹⁶ It also states that the men of Flanders, Ponthieu, Normandy, and France were exempt from the toll, but that the men of Huy, Leige, and Nivelles had to pay for the right to display their

⁹⁰ Brown, “Bound by Tradition,” at 22.

⁹¹ Brown, “Bound by Tradition,” at 27.

⁹² Mainman and Rogers, “Craft and Economy in Anglo-Scandinavian York,” 460.

⁹³ Mainman and Rogers, “Craft and Economy in Anglo-Scandinavian York,” 460, Dodd, Mellor, Allen, Adams and Unit, *Oxford before the University: The Late Saxon and Norman Archaeology of the Thames Crossing, the Defences and the Town*, 44.

⁹⁴ Parkhouse, “The Distribution and Exchange of Mayan Lava Quernstones,” 99-105. Also see chapter 2.

⁹⁵ IV Æthelred in *GDA*, 233-7. Hereafter *GDA*

⁹⁶ IV Æthelred, *GDA*, 233-7.

goods and pay the toll. Additionally, the men of the Emperor, who came in their own ships, were allowed to buy raw wool, fat, and three live pigs but were not to impose on the citizens.⁹⁷

At the turn of the millennium, London was, seemingly, once again an important node in network of European trading towns. The Continental towns that traded with London during the tenth and eleventh centuries included emerging fortified urban-centers that themselves were the *de facto* successors of the great Continental emporia of the eighth and ninth centuries that had traded with *Lundenwic*. These towns included Tiel, which was a successor to Dorestad and Montreuil-sur-Mer which was adjacent to the site of the former emporium at Quentovic.⁹⁸ The desire to protect craft production and trade, and royal revenues they generated, was not exclusive to the kings of England, their Continental contemporaries were clearly struck with it as well.

It was not only the large towns such as London and Winchester, that developed and expanded during the tenth and eleventh centuries, as Mark Gardiner has shown, the resurgence of cross-Channel trade during the eleventh century gave rise to a number of smaller ports along the southern and eastern coasts of England, including Arundel, Steyning, Lewes, Pevensey, Hastings, and Sandwich to name just a few.⁹⁹ As Chris Loveluck and Dries Tys have argued this network of smaller ports and landing places has its origin in the older

⁹⁷ IV Æthelred, *GDA*, 233-7.

⁹⁸ Lebecq and Gautier, "Routeways between England and the Continent in the Tenth Century," 19-30.

⁹⁹ Mark Gardiner, "Shipping and Trade between England and the Continent During the Eleventh Century," *Anglo-Norman Studies*, XXII (2000), 71-93, at 83-93.

networks of communications and trade that encompassed smaller coastal sites, as a well as the great emporia, on both sides of the channel from the seventh to tenth centuries.¹⁰⁰ This theory certainly aligns well with how the regional and international trade taking place in the towns of eleventh-century England looks archaeologically.

The growing importance of regional and cross-channel trade to townspeople and their rulers during the tenth and eleventh centuries is evidenced by the effort exerted to develop the London waterfront. Along the Thames foreshore from Queenhithe to Billingsgate, the banks were reinforced and built-up during the tenth and eleventh centuries to make them hospitable to the ships and barges that carried the wool, timber, wine, fish, cattle, and countless other goods traded at London. The transformation of the Thames foreshore began at Queenhithe where late ninth-century timber features and a possible barge bed have been uncovered.¹⁰¹ Later, during the tenth century, a series of timber revetments were constructed and then filled with earth, stone, and wood to create a level river frontage at Queenhithe.¹⁰²

To the east of Queenhithe, adjacent to Billingsgate and the bridgehead, at what is now New Fresh Wharf, a rubble bank with a “regular and gently sloping upper surface” was built against the timbers of the surviving Roman quay at some point during the late tenth century.¹⁰³ The eastern end of the

¹⁰⁰ Loveluck and Tys, “Coastal Societies, Exchange and Identity Along the Channel and Southern North Sea Shores of Europe AD 600-1000,” at 159-63.

¹⁰¹ Wroe-Brown, “The Saxon Origins of Queenhithe,” at 13.

¹⁰² Wroe-Brown, “The Saxon Origins of Queenhithe,” at 14.

¹⁰³ Steedman, Dyson and Schofield, *The Bridgehead and Billingsgate to 1200*, 23-9, 99-101.

eighteen meter bank was covered with planks and the remains of a clinker-built boat which has been dated via Dendrochronology to circa 915 to 955.¹⁰⁴ On the west end of the embankment, at least two rows of substantial posts and a number of smaller stakes were driven into the foreshore to support a jetty.¹⁰⁵ The jetty itself was large enough, one-hundred square meters, to serve as a market space.¹⁰⁶ It was also during this period, the late tenth to early eleventh centuries, that the timber bridge across the Thames was rebuilt connecting the walled city with growing suburb of Southwark.

The list of tolls from Billingsgate, beyond itemizing some of the goods traded at London and providing the origin of the men who brought those goods to the town, reveals the depth of royal interest in controlling and profiting from trade in the tenth and eleventh centuries. The fruition of the economic aspirations that Alfred and his heirs had for their *burhs* during the late ninth and tenth centuries required an expansion of the royal mechanisms intended to control trade. The physical development of the English towns was paralleled by the development of structures to try and impose royal control over the trade that took place in them and to extract revenue from them.

The transition is visible in a new usage of the word *port* in Anglo-Saxon texts as applied to towns. Beginning in the late ninth century the word *port* was used to describe a town where trade took place.¹⁰⁷ During the first quarter of the ninth century, the laws of Edward the Elder instructed that trade was to

¹⁰⁴ Steedman, Dyson and Schofield, *The Bridgehead and Billingsgate to 1200*, 23-9, 99.

¹⁰⁵ Steedman, Dyson and Schofield, *The Bridgehead and Billingsgate to 1200*, 23-9, 101-4.

¹⁰⁶ Steedman, Dyson and Schofield, *The Bridgehead and Billingsgate to 1200*, 103.

¹⁰⁷ See Chapter 3, 91-100.

be conducted in a *port* and should be witnessed by the *portgerefa* or portreeve.¹⁰⁸ This denotes a cognizance that trade was taking place outside of royal scrutiny and that some of the *burhs* were already evolving into full-fledged trading towns. Less than fifteen years after Edward issued his edict on trade, Æthelstan appears to have given up trying to control the trade of low-value items. Æthelstan stated that any trade in excess of 20d. should take place in a *port*.¹⁰⁹ This edict indicates that so many exchanges of differing values were taking place, at such a variety of places, that it was no longer worthwhile to try to control them. Æthelstan also ordered that there should be a single currency and that coin should only be minted in a *port*.¹¹⁰ As we have seen, by the reign of Æthelred, royal edicts on trade had progressed to the point of spelling out the regulations for specific goods and specific groups of foreign traders.

Although more detailed, the laws and tolls that we know about from the tenth and eleventh centuries are not completely novel and they certainly built upon earlier royal activities.¹¹¹ Indeed, we have evidence for tolls at *Lundenwic*, Fordwich, and Sarre during the eighth century.¹¹² Æthelred in exacting the tolls at Billingsgate was obviously influenced by earlier Anglo-Saxon examples as well those of his Continental contemporaries.¹¹³ The end-game for tenth- and eleventh-century English kings who promoted and

¹⁰⁸ I Edward 1, *GDA*, 138.

¹⁰⁹ II Æthelstan 12, *GDA*, 156.

¹¹⁰ II Æthelstan 14, *GDA*, 156.

¹¹¹ See Chapter 2, 38-42.

¹¹² Kelly, "Trading Privileges from Eighth-Century England," at 3-13.

¹¹³ Middleton, "Early Medieval Port Customs," at 333-49.

protected craft production and trade in their towns was certainly the collection of tolls and taxes, just as it had been for their forbears who promoted and protected craft production and trade at the earlier emporia.

The body of evidence for increasing craft production and trade in English towns during the tenth and eleventh centuries continues to grow with each new excavation and find. As this corpus expands, it reveals the complexity of the regional and cross-Channel networks that fostered the growth of towns and their relationship to the earlier networks that included the emporia. It also reveals that once relative peace and stability returned, Alfred the Great and his heirs, as well as other English and Scandinavian elites, actively worked to recreate within the towns under their control the very conditions that fostered trade at the earlier emporia.

This evidence also calls into question the old axiom that the so-called “viking towns” of the Danelaw developed more rapidly during the tenth and eleventh centuries than towns in the south. Although excavations at York may have, so far, produced a larger variety of imported goods than those uncovered at London, London was most certainly the larger of the two settlements in the year 1000. Indeed, London and Winchester were both larger and more densely settled than any of the Five Boroughs of the former Danelaw at the start of the eleventh century.¹¹⁴ It is, therefore, probably more fruitful to look at the growth of towns in both the English and Scandinavian controlled areas of Britain as one phenomenon.

¹¹⁴ Hall, “Anglo-Scandinavian Urban Development in the East Midlands,” 147-53.

The cross-Channel trade that the eleventh-century towns of England participated in was not the product of some “big bang” event that suddenly scattered mature trade networks across Western Europe on the eve of the millennium. To the contrary, it was the product of more than a century of effort by generations of kings, elites, farmers, craftsmen, and traders to increase agricultural output, build defensible towns, bring back intensive craft production, and reestablish regional and cross-Channel trade networks. Once the literal groundwork had been laid within the new towns established during the ninth and tenth centuries, craft production and trade were able to once again rise to the profitable levels enjoyed by their eighth-century forbears.

7. Vikings and Normans

The eleventh century saw England and its towns return to a level of prosperity not visible since the emporia were at their peak in the mid-eighth century.¹ Somewhat ironically, it was England's prosperity which brought about the return of the very threat that, two centuries earlier, had spurred the transformation of the emporia from undefended trading settlements to walled towns—the vikings.² Moreover, it was its wealth that made England an attractive prize for the Normans who followed in the wake of the vikings. Just as Frisian and Frankish traders, Italian monks, and earlier generations of vikings had before them, these Norse and Norman foreigners helped to shape the development of England's towns during the course of the eleventh century.

During the decades on either side of the year 1000, England was beset by a renewed wave of viking assaults and its towns, with their central role in its

¹ For examples of the developing recognition of the wealth of the eleventh-century English towns over the last century, see: Tait, *The Medieval English Borough*, 117-23, Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, 543-4, Reynolds, *An Introduction to the History of English Medieval Towns*, 304-9, Nightingale, "The Evolution of Weight-Standards and the Creation of New Monetary and Commercial Links in Northern Europe from the Tenth Century to the Twelfth Century," at 198-209, Grenville Astill, "Towns and Town Hierarchies in Saxon England," *Oxford Journal of Archaeology*, 10 (1991), 95-117, at 112-4, Holt, "The Urban Transformation in England," at 70-8.

² Malcolm, Bowsher and Cowie, *Middle Saxon London*, 110-1, Keene, "The Cambridge Urban History," 190-3.

vibrant, silver-rich economy, were the favored targets of these raids.³ As centers of commerce and monetary activity, England's towns exerted an inexorable pull on the avaricious Scandinavian warriors, in much the same way they did on the foreign merchants who were far more welcomed at their quays. In each instance, raider or trader, England's towns provided an opportunity for these foreigners to tap into the kingdoms' abundant wealth.

This new period of viking activity appears to have begun in 980, when Southampton was attacked and, according to the *Chronicle*, "most of the townspeople were killed or taken hostage."⁴ Although the initial viking activity of the 980's appears to have been limited to small scale raids along the eastern and southern coasts, the 990's saw the return of larger raiding-armies, the likes of which had not been seen in England since the reign of Alfred the Great.⁵ The basic narrative of this period, as relayed by the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, reveals the vikings' strategy of attacking England's towns as a means of extorting geld payments.⁶ In 991, a viking force, possibly led by Olaf Tryggvason, raided Sandwich and Ipswich leading up to the famous Battle of

³ M. K. Lawson, *Cnut: The Danes in England in the Early Eleventh Century* (London ; New York, 1993), 14-20, Simon Keynes, "The Historical Context of the Battle of Maldon," in D. G. Scragg (ed.), *The Battle of Maldon, AD 991* (1991), 81-113, at 85-95, Mark Blackburn, "Æthelred's Coinage and the Payment of Tribute," in D. G. Scragg (ed.), *The Battle of Maldon, AD 991* (1991), 156-69, at 164-6.

⁴ ASC (C), s.a. 980.

⁵ Richard Abels, "English Tactics, Strategy and Military Organization in the Late Tenth Century" in D. G. Scragg (ed.), *The Battle of Maldon, AD 991* (1991), 143-55, at 143, Keynes, "The Historical Context," 84-104, Simon Keynes, "A Tale of Two Kings: Alfred the Great and Æthelred the Unready," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 36 (1986), 195-217, at 203-8.

⁶ M.K. Lawson, "The Collection of the Danegeld and Heregeld in the Reign of Æthelred II and Cnut," *The English Historical Review*, 99 (1984), 721-38, at 721-36, John Gillingham, "the Most Precious Jewel in the English Crown: Levels of Denegeld and Heregeld in the Early Eleventh Century," *The English Historical Review*, 104 (1989), 373-84, at 373-84.

Maldon.⁷ In 994, a raiding-army led by Olaf and Swein Forkbeard attacked London but were repelled by the *burhwaru* of the town.⁸ Undeterred, the viking forces of Olaf and Swein then raided from Essex to Hampshire until they were offered a *geld* payment by Æthelred II.⁹ After wintering at Southampton, they were paid £16,000 by the English.¹⁰ Beyond what was paid to the his army, Æthelred also bought off Olaf Tryggvason individually with “kingly gifts” in exchange for his oath to never again attack England.¹¹

The *gelds* of the early 990’s, however, only bought England and its towns a temporary peace. In 999, a viking army led by Swein Forkbeard raided Rochester and Kent.¹² In 1001, Swein’s army returned and unsuccessfully attacked Exeter.¹³ They then raided across the south and encamped at the Isle of Wight.¹⁴ In 1002, Swein’s army was paid £24,000 to leave England.¹⁵ In the same year, many of England’s towns must have been shaken by the St. Brice’s day massacre of the Danes living in England, which included the burning of those Danes who had sought refuge at St. Frideswides church in Oxford.¹⁶ Although they cannot be directly linked to the events of St. Brices’s day, the pervasive violence witnessed by England’s towns during this period is revealed by the skeletal remains of thirty-seven men, likely of Scandinavian origin,

⁷ ASC (*a*), s.a. 991.

⁸ ASC (*C*), s.a. 994.

⁹ ASC (*C*), s.a. 994.

¹⁰ ASC (*C*), s.a. 994.

¹¹ ASC (*C*), s.a. 994.

¹² ASC (*C*), s.a. 999.

¹³ ASC (*C*), s.a. 1001.

¹⁴ ASC (*C*), s.a. 1001.

¹⁵ ASC (*C*), s.a. 1002.

¹⁶ ASC (*C*), s.a. 1002, *S*, ed. Sawyer, 909.

recovered from a tenth- or eleventh-century mass grave on the grounds of St. John's College, Oxford.¹⁷ All of the men bore the marks of serious perimortem injuries including multiple blade wounds and some displayed evidence of having been burned before being buried.¹⁸ Clearly, at times, the English responded to the viking raids with iron as well as silver.

Swein, possibly motivated by the events of St. Brice's day, returned with his army in 1003 and, this time, succeeded in sacking the Exeter.¹⁹ In 1004, Swein and his followers sacked and burned Norwich and Thetford.²⁰ In 1006, Sandwich was attacked, yet again, and Swein's vikings were finally bought off for £36,000 the following year.²¹ In 1009, a large viking force led by Thorkell Havi appeared at Sandwich and then moved on to Canterbury where they were paid £3,000 to spare the town.²² After withdrawing from Canterbury, Thorkell's vikings went on to attack and burn Oxford.²³ In 1010, they burned Thetford, Cambridge, Bedford, and Northampton.²⁴ In 1011, Thorkell's army returned to Canterbury, besieged and, eventually, captured the town, taking Archbishop Ælfheah hostage during the assault.²⁵ In the spring of 1012, Thorkell and his vikings were paid £48,000 as they camped outside of London.²⁶

¹⁷ A.M. Pollard, P. Ditchfield, E. Piva, S. Wallis, C. Falys and S. Ford, "'Sprouting Like Cockle Amongst the Wheat': The St Brice's Day Massacre and the Isotopic Analysis of Human Bones from St John's College, Oxford," *Oxford Journal of Archaeology*, 31 (2012), 83-102, at 83-98.

¹⁸ Pollard, Ditchfield, Piva, Wallis, Falys and Ford, "'Sprouting Like Cockle Amongst the Wheat'," at 84.

¹⁹ ASC (C), s.a. 1003.

²⁰ ASC (C), s.a. 1004.

²¹ ASC (C), s.a. 1006, 7.

²² ASC (C), s.a. 1009, Keynes, "The Historical Context," 95.

²³ ASC (C), s.a. 1009.

²⁴ ASC (C), s.a. 1010.

²⁵ ASC (C), s.a. 1011.

²⁶ ASC (C), s.a. 1012.

Despite the *geld* payment, the vikings killed the Archbishop as he refused, or lacked the resources, to personally redeem himself.²⁷ It was at this point that Thorkell and some forty-five ships of his fleet were hired into King Æthelred's service.²⁸

The following year, 1013, Swein Forkbeard returned to England—perhaps with a greater prize in mind—and he once again focused his efforts on its towns, immediately forcing the submission of the Five Boroughs, Oxford, and Winchester.²⁹ He then attacked London, where King Æthelred was holed up, but the Londoners were able to once again repel Swein's army.³⁰ London, it seems, was the only town with the wherewithal to consistently resist the viking attacks during the early eleventh century. As Richard Abels has suggested, the smaller towns of England may have let their defenses erode during the period of peace and prosperity prior to the reign of Æthelred.³¹ After his failed attempt to take London, Swein moved on to capture Wallingford and then Bath.³² Once he had secured himself at Bath, Swein accepted the submission of the Mercian *thegns* and was recognized as king.³³ It was only at this point that the population of London submitted to Swein and supplied him with hostages.³⁴ London's successful defense of its walls earlier in 1013, however, had delayed

²⁷ ASC (C), s.a. 1012.

²⁸ Simon Keynes, "Cnut's Earls," in A. R. Rumble (ed.), *The Reign of Cnut: King of England, Denmark and Norway* (1994), 4-88, at 55.

²⁹ ASC (C), s.a. 1013.

³⁰ ASC (C), s.a. 1013.

³¹ Abels, "English Tactics," 144.

³² ASC (C), s.a. 1013.

³³ ASC (C), s.a. 1013.

³⁴ ASC (C), s.a. 1013.

the completion of Swein's conquest long enough to allow Æthelred to flee to the court of Richard II in Normandy.³⁵

Swein's death in 1014 provided England and its towns with a brief respite, which allowed Æthelred to return and drive Swein's son, Cnut, from the island.³⁶ The peace was short-lived, as Cnut returned with an army in 1015 and quickly secured the services of the turncoats Eadric Streona and Thorkell Havi.³⁷ In 1016, amidst the turmoil of Cnut's invasion, the population of London again displayed their growing political strength when Æthelred died in the city and they joined the *witan* in declaring Edmund Ironside king.³⁸ Following his selection as king, Edmund slipped out of London just before Cnut's forces laid siege to the city.³⁹ After raising an army, Edmund returned to relieve London, only to later allow it to be taken as part of the settlement he made with Cnut after the battle of *Assandun*.⁴⁰ London was clearly a prize that both sides wanted to control and once it was given into his hands Cnut occupied it from that point forward.⁴¹ In 1018, when Cnut levied a tax on the entire kingdom, the inhabitants of London literally paid the price for their support of the West Saxon dynasty, having to contribute £10,500 of their own silver in addition to the other £72,000 raised across England.⁴²

³⁵ ASC (C), s.a. 1013.

³⁶ ASC (C), s.a. 1014, Lawson, *Cnut: The Danes in England in the Early Eleventh Century*, 20.

³⁷ ASC (C), s.a. 1015, Keynes, "Cnut's Earls," 55, 67.

³⁸ ASC (C), s.a. 1016.

³⁹ ASC (C), s.a. 1016.

⁴⁰ ASC (C), s.a. 1016.

⁴¹ ASC (C), s.a. 1016.

⁴² ASC (C), s.a. 1016.

Although it has been speculated that the return of the vikings to England in the late tenth century may have been spurred on by the political upheaval in England brought about by the struggle for succession after the death of King Edgar or by the subjugation of Denmark by Harold Bluetooth in the early 980's, it is far more likely, given the overwhelming evidence of their desire for *geld* payments, that the vikings were simply drawn to the vast amount of wealth being generated in England during this period.⁴³ The volume of silver coin being produced in England's towns must have been irresistible to the Scandinavian warriors who were looking to acquire portable wealth and to their leaders who wanted to finance military and dynastic endeavors at home in Scandinavia.⁴⁴ The vikings' desire for coin was certainly well known to the Anglo-Saxons. In the poem that commemorates the Battle of Maldon, the vikings' messenger conveys to Ealdorman Byrhtnoth that the vikings would exchange "his followers for silver," make "peace for money," and "board our ships with your coin."⁴⁵

As M.K. Lawson has noted, counting just the payments listed in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, the English may have paid out as much as £219,500 to the various viking armies from 991 to 1018.⁴⁶ Although there are valid skepticisms of the exact amounts listed in the *Chronicle*, there is no reason,

⁴³ Peter Sawyer, *The Wealth of Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford, 2013), 108-10, Keynes, "The Historical Context," 82-5.

⁴⁴ Blackburn, "Æthelred's Coinage and the Payment of Tribute," 156.

⁴⁵ "on hyra sylfra do, feoh wid freoh, mid tham sceattu ut to scype gangan" author's translation of "The Casley Transcript of the Battle of Maldon," in D. G. Scragg (ed.), *The Battle of Maldon, AD 991* (1991), 2-14, at 4.

⁴⁶ Lawson, "The Collection of the Danegeld and Heregeld in the Reign of Æthelred II and Cnut," at 721, 36-38.

now, to doubt that the sums presented were, at the very least, possible.⁴⁷ Indeed, considering that it only lists the most notable *geld* payments and not smaller payments from individuals or religious institutions, the sum total of *geld* payments laid out in the *Chronicle* may actually represent a conservative estimate of the wealth that the vikings took out of England at the beginning of the eleventh century.⁴⁸ What makes these estimates even more plausible is the distinct possibility that the *geld* payments that reached Scandinavia during this period were actually surpassed by the English coin that reached the region via trade.⁴⁹

If the desire to attain ready wealth in the form of silver coin and treasure was a key motivation of the vikings, it explains why the England's towns were such frequent targets of their attacks. England's towns were the engines that converted its rural produce into the silver the vikings so desired.⁵⁰ The towns and their mints both figuratively and literally produced the coin that was used to purchase peace from the vikings or to hire them as mercenaries.⁵¹ The strength of England's economy, based in no small part on the trade and craft production taking place in its towns, is what drew the vikings back to its shores year after year at the start of the eleventh century.

⁴⁷ Gillingham, "the Most Precious Jewel in the English Crown: Levels of Denegeld and Heregeld in the Early Eleventh Century," at 373-84, M. K. Lawson, "Those Stories Look True: Levels of Taxation in the Reigns of Aethelred II and Cnut," *The English Historical Review*, 104 (1989), 385-406, at 385-406.

⁴⁸ Lawson, "The Collection of the Danegeld and Heregeld in the Reign of Aethelred II and Cnut," at 737, Blackburn, "Aethelred's Coinage and the Payment of Tribute," 164-5.

⁴⁹ D.M Metcalf, "Inflows of Anglo-Saxon and German Coins into the Northern Lands C. 997-1024: Discerning the Patterns " in B. Cook and G. Williams (eds.), *Coinage and History in the North Sea World, C. AD 500-1250* (2006), 349-88, at 381-5.

⁵⁰ See Chapter 2 and chapter 5.

⁵¹ Blackburn, "Aethelred's Coinage and the Payment of Tribute," 163-6.

The pursuit of silver appears to have been the driving force behind the first wave of viking attacks on England as well.⁵² Even cursory examinations of the levels of coin production and circulation in England during each of period of intense viking activity reveal an increased output at its mints. Rory Naismith has shown that the output of England's mints between the mid-eighth century and the mid-ninth century, the heyday of the emporia and the first era of viking activity, was extremely high.⁵³ Likewise, Peter Sawyer has demonstrated that the late tenth and early eleventh centuries saw a surge in coin production in England's towns that rivaled the earlier peak during the period of the emporia.⁵⁴ It appears more than coincidental, then, that both of these periods saw an increase in the availability of silver and then experienced a wave of viking attacks.

Even after Cnut had established himself as king and the viking attacks had all but subsided, England and its towns continued to be a source of wealth, particularly silver, for much of Scandinavia. Cnut was able to exert control over a dispersed empire because, after his conquest of England, he could immediately draw on its vast economic resources to maintain his entire domain.⁵⁵ Cnut was able to reward supporters and hire ships and men to

⁵² Søren Michael Sindbæk, "Silver Economies and Social Ties: Long-Distance Interaction, Long-Term Investments - and Why the Viking Age Happened," in J. Graham-Campbell, S. M. Sindbæk and G. Williams (eds.), *Silver Economies, Monetisation and Society in Scandinavia, AD 800-1100* (2011), 41-65, at 45-59.

⁵³ Naismith, *Money and Power in Anglo-Saxon England: The Southern English Kingdoms, 757-865*, 181-98.

⁵⁴ Sawyer, *The Wealth of Anglo-Saxon England*, 87-110, 5-25.

⁵⁵ Lawson, *Cnut: The Danes in England in the Early Eleventh Century*, 189-207, 15-17, Alexander R. Rumble, "Introduction: Cnut in Context," in A. R. Rumble (ed.), *The Reign of Cnut: King of England, Denmark and Norway*, Studies in the Early History of Britain (1994), 1-9, at 6-9.

safeguard his Scandinavian kingdoms using English revenues.⁵⁶ Cnut, much to his benefit, had taken control of an advanced economy that was vibrant enough to have survived the preceding period of viking attacks and he and his father's invasions functionally intact.

One of the stark differences between the eleventh century and the first period of viking activity in England was that the later towns displayed a greater resilience and better ability to rebound from the viking attacks than the emporia had during the ninth century.⁵⁷ Indeed, if their renders in 1066 are any indication, even the towns of England that had suffered the worst of the viking attacks fared well during the middle decades of the eleventh century. According to *Domesday*, Canterbury was valued at £51 per year and Sandwich at £15 per year in 1066.⁵⁸ Rochester paid 100s annually.⁵⁹ Oxford, situated at an important crossing on the Thames, paid £20 *per annum*.⁶⁰ Exeter paid £18 to the king, £6 to the sheriff, and £12 to Colwin for the queen's property during the Confessor's reign.⁶¹ Exeter also paid a ½ a mark of silver as *geld* when London, Winchester, and York paid.⁶² There are no figures in *Domesday* for London, but we can be certain that it surpassed all of the other towns in England by every measure; economic, demographic, or otherwise in 1066.⁶³

⁵⁶ Lawson, *Cnut: The Danes in England in the Early Eleventh Century*, 215-6.

⁵⁷ See Chapter 2, 49-50.

⁵⁸ *Domesday Book*, ed. A. Williams, R. W. H. Erskine and G. H. Martin (London, 1986), 2r. Hereafter DB.

⁵⁹ DB, 2r.

⁶⁰ DB, 154r.

⁶¹ DB, 100r.

⁶² DB, 100r.

⁶³ Keene, "The Cambridge Urban History," 192-3.

The post-viking vitality of England's towns, ironically enough, owed something to the dynastic intentions of Cnut himself. For his part, Cnut actively encouraged international trade and his support was not limited to trade with Scandinavia. As Pamela Nightingale has shown, by the eleventh century England was the center of a region of monetary standardization and exchange that covered Flanders, northern France, and Scandinavia, which must have been created to foster trade.⁶⁴ Cnut, the son and grandson of kingdom builders, clearly had some understanding of how England's economy functioned and the importance of towns and trade to its success.⁶⁵ Moreover, unlike William the Conqueror fifty years later, Cnut did little to disrupt the local power structures or institutions that held sway in England's towns and, having replaced the ealdormen with just a handful of earls, he may have even relied on the local reeves and *thegns* more directly than his predecessors.⁶⁶ This local control of towns must have helped to preserve the connections that had been built between England's towns and their counterparts in Normandy, France, and the Low Countries prior to Cnut's reign.⁶⁷

It was not only long-established towns like Canterbury, London, Oxford, and Winchester that prospered during Cnut's reign, the relatively new ports that had sprung-up along England's southern coast during the late tenth and early eleventh century expanded as well.⁶⁸ The development of the southern

⁶⁴ Nightingale, "The Evolution of Weight-Standards and the Creation of New Monetary and Commercial Links in Northern Europe from the Tenth Century to the Twelfth Century," at 192.

⁶⁵ Lawson, *Cnut: The Danes in England in the Early Eleventh Century*, 202-7.

⁶⁶ Keynes, "Cnut's Earls," 78-81.

⁶⁷ IV Æthelred in *GDA*, 233-7.

⁶⁸ Gardiner, "Shipping and Trade " at 71-93.

ports and the intensification of cross-Channel trade had political as well as economic consequences. As Cnut's reign came to a close, England's leading aristocratic family, the Godwinesons, held sway over much of the south and controlled many of the ports of the Channel coast, including Lewes and Steyning, as well as Southwark—the important extramural landing and market on the Thames, just across from London.⁶⁹ The economic interests of southern England's most important family were, therefore, aligned with those of London and the towns of the southern and eastern coasts and were oriented more towards France, Normandy, the Low Countries, than Scandinavia.

Earl Godwine and his sons, particularly Harold, must have been mindful of their economic connections when considering the royal succession. For the Godwinesons and the other elites who held property in London or the Channel ports, Edward the Confessor was an eminently acceptable choice as king after the death of Cnut and his sons. Not only was he of English royal blood, Edward's Norman maternity and upbringing may have been seen, in London and the other ports with Continental ties, as a way to strengthen their commercial connections with Normandy and France. The prospect of more advantageous relations with Normandy and France must have helped to make Edward acceptable to the Godwinesons with their extensive holdings in the southern ports. Frank Barlow has described Earl Godwine's support of Edward as "surprising," however, if we consider this support in the light of his family's

⁶⁹ Robin Fleming, *Kings and Lords in Conquest England* (Cambridge, 1991), 90-8, Robin Fleming, "Rural Elites and Urban Communities in Late-Saxon England," *Past and Present*, 141 (1993), 3-37, at 8-11.

south-coast economic interests and their perceived ability to control Edward and the succession through marriage, it makes perfect sense.⁷⁰

For England and especially London, Edward the Confessor's reign was, in many ways, a primer for the Norman Conquest. During his reign, London, England's most powerful and independent town, displayed a willingness to accept the presence of Edward's Norman associates. He appointed his closest advisor, Robert of Jumieges, as bishop of London sometime in the 1040s.⁷¹ Robert would later become England's first Norman archbishop. A few years later, the see of London went to yet another Norman priest, William, who was a member of Edward's household.⁷² Edward's reign even introduced new Continental-style architecture to the city. Just before his death, Edward had a new Norman-style abbey built in Westminster, a Norman monument built to house his remains, one that would soon serve as the scene of the coronation of England's first Norman king.⁷³ It is interesting to consider that some of the stone used to build the abbey may have even been imported from across the sea.⁷⁴ The influx of Norman courtiers during Edward's reign in conjunction with the commercial ties between England's ports and those in Normandy and France must have provided the future Conqueror and his supporters with a tantalizing view of the economic resources and the potential wealth that were waiting to be seized just across the Channel.

⁷⁰ Frank Barlow, *Edward the Confessor* (London, 1970), 56.

⁷¹ Barlow, *Edward the Confessor*, 86.

⁷² Barlow, *Edward the Confessor*, 105, 15.

⁷³ Barlow, *Edward the Confessor*, 246-52.

⁷⁴ Peter Mills, "Excavations at the Dorter Undercroft, Westminster Abbey," *Transactions of the London and Middlesex Archaeological Society*, 46 (1995), 69-124, at 103.

At the close of the Anglo-Saxon period, after Harold Godwineson's death at Hastings, the population of London was once again faced with the decision to accept or resist a foreign claimant to the throne. The *Chronicle* relates that, faced with this prospect, "all the best men of London" submitted to the Conqueror out of "necessity."⁷⁵ The "necessity" that the chronicler wrote of must have, in part, been born of the Londoners' desire to preserve and advance their own prosperity. London in the previous century had prospered economically with the aid of foreign communities of merchants—those men of Rouen, Flanders, Ponthieu, and Normandy mentioned in list of tolls known as IV Æthelred.⁷⁶ The commercial ties they shared with their countrymen must have made the Conqueror and his Norman and French supporters somewhat more acceptable to the Londoners. In the end, the Londoners' familiarity with Normans and Frenchmen and their pragmatism in the face of William the Conqueror's victory at Hastings won out over any sense of English unity. Their pragmatism, moreover, appears to have been rewarded in the new king's charter to London, which promised to portreeve and all of the *burhwaru*, both French and English, to protect their rights as they were in 1066.⁷⁷

The Londoners were prescient in trying to safeguard their rights, as the coming of the Normans brought about much deeper changes in the economic, social, and physical fabric of England's towns than the viking attacks and Cnut's conquest had a half century earlier. As it did all across England, the

⁷⁵ ASC (D), s.a. 1066.

⁷⁶ IV Æthelred in *GDA*, 233-7.

⁷⁷ *Regesta*, 180. Hereafter *Regesta*.

Norman Conquest dramatically altered the structures of property-holding and lordship in its towns.⁷⁸ Whereas the majority of Cnut's vikings were content to receive their geld payments and return to Scandinavia, the Normans who fought for William the Conqueror had long-term aspirations and expected to receive land and property as a reward for their service. Urban property, or even better the control of an entire town, was an attractive and lucrative opportunity for England's new elites. In the immediate post-Conquest period, the Norman lords of England coveted the urban properties linked to their estates just as their antecessors had.⁷⁹

In a number of cases, acquisitive English landholders had worked hard during the late Anglo-Saxon period to control and exploit already established small towns. Men like Wigot of Wallingford, who had twenty properties in Wallingford, and Earl Algar, who had twenty dwellings in Oxford, must have had overwhelming economic power in their respective communities.⁸⁰ There was the *thegn* Eadmer Atre, who held fifty-three burgesses in Barkhamstead in Hertfordshire.⁸¹ Barkhamstead was a small town and this must have represented a large percentage of the population there. After the Conquest, some Normans adopted this strategy as well; *Domesday* for example preserves the ways in which William Malet and his son Robert had assumed control of Dunwich and its market, lucrative assets that their antecessor Eadric of

⁷⁸ See Fleming, *Kings and Lords in Conquest England*, 107-44.

⁷⁹ Fleming, *Kings and Lords in Conquest England*, 194-9.

⁸⁰ *DB*, 56v, 154r.

⁸¹ *DB*, 136v.

Laxfield had held.⁸² The market center under the Malets' control must have been wildly successful, because it had grown in value by £40, or about ten thousand silver pennies, in the years between the Conquest and 1086.⁸³

In many cases, cash-hungry Normans moved to force themselves into the commercial economy of a region by either seizing control of an existing town or by creating a new, competitive town of their own. These attempts to break into the commercial economy often put the Normans into direct conflict with established property holders, particularly religious houses, upon whose rights they infringed. In no region was this truer than in the southeast, as evidenced by the efforts of both secular elites and religious communities to control the Channel ports. An illustrative example of this is the series of disputes that arose between the Abbey of the Holy Trinity at Fécamp, first with Harold Godwineson and then with William de Broase for the control of Steyning, Sussex.

Steyning had been gifted to Fécamp by Edward the Confessor but was seized by Harold prior to the Conquest.⁸⁴ Petitioned by the abbey, William the Conqueror promised to restore Steyning to Fécamp even before he sailed for England.⁸⁵ After the Conquest, William de Broase who held the castle at Bramber, downstream from Steyning, took control of the market and tolls of Steyning depriving Fécamp of its revenue.⁸⁶ To resolve the dispute, Fécamp

⁸² *DB*, 311r, 2v.

⁸³ *DB*, 311r, 2v.

⁸⁴ Fleming, *Kings and Lords in Conquest England*, 84, 95.

⁸⁵ *Regesta*, 144.

⁸⁶ *DB*, 67.

was able to secure a judgment in 1085 that instructed de Broase to give the abbey the full toll on weekdays and half of the toll on Saturday, unless the ships went to his market at the castle.⁸⁷ Despite this ruling, the conflict continued for the next two centuries, as descendants of de Broase continued to attempt to exert control over the market. Fécamp's long-term solution to the dispute was to rely on the new town and port it held at Rye, which gave the abbey direct access to the sea.⁸⁸ De Broase's actions and Holy Trinity's response are indicative of the complexity and strength of the economic networks that reached across the Channel at this time. De Broase had seized control of one regional market, and Fécamp was able to utilize their control of another town to help offset the loss.

The struggle to control Steyning was intensified by its prime location on the Sussex coast.⁸⁹ In examining the evidence for landholding in late eleventh century Sussex a larger pattern becomes apparent, the Channel ports opposite Normandy were becoming increasingly more valuable in the eleventh century. As Mark Gardiner has suggested, the new Norman lords of England were accumulating coastal holdings to facilitate the transport of goods between their possessions on both sides of the channel.⁹⁰ In seeking to control cross-channel trade, the Normans were appropriating a process that predated the Conquest. We know that Fécamp had both received control of Steyning and

⁸⁷ *Regesta*, 146.

⁸⁸ David Freke, "Medieval Urban Archaeology in Sussex," in P. L. Drewitt (ed.), *Archaeology in Sussex to 1500* (1978), 87-92, at 89-90.

⁸⁹ Gardiner, "Shipping and Trade " at 79.

⁹⁰ Gardiner, "Shipping and Trade " at 71-94.

founded Rye prior to the Conquest. Moreover, the Godwinesons had moved decisively, ruthlessly, and illegally to take Steyning over lock stock and barrel before 1066.

The growing importance of the towns of the southern and eastern coasts can also be seen in the fact that, after the Conquest, three of the five richest *Domesday* tenants-in-chief held port towns and/or castles on the Sussex coast in 1086. Roger de Montgomery held the town of Chichester and the castle at Arundel, with its “borough and the port of the river.”⁹¹ The Count of Mortain held Pevensey, with its harbor and mint.⁹² Willam de Warrene held the major port town of Lewes.⁹³ In addition to the tenants-in-chief, and obviously the king, many other members of the highest levels of the Anglo-Norman aristocracy held property in these towns. In the case of Lewes, of the fifteen major landholders listed in the Sussex folios of *Domesday*, one-third had some interest in Lewes. These included the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishop of Chichester, St. Peter’s Winchester, and Battle Abbey.⁹⁴ In Lewes, only a few of the old Anglo-Saxon landholders kept their sites. Men like Leofnoth with his three properties and Osweard with his one and one-half property which they held before 1066 were the exception in Lewes and new men like William de Watteville, who held twenty-five sites in Lewes and whose wife held nine more, were becoming the rule.⁹⁵

⁹¹ *DB*, 23r.

⁹² *DB*, 20v.

⁹³ *DB*, 26r.

⁹⁴ *DB*, 26r.

⁹⁵ *DB*, 26r, v, 7r, 7v, 8r, 8v.

What the preceding evidence reveals is the playing-out of the new economic and social order that was overtaking England and its towns and the resulting selection of its winners and losers. At the most visible level, the new Norman lords of England, like William de Broase, the Malets, Willam de Warrene, and William de Watteville, were obviously reaping the benefits of the urban properties previously enjoyed by their disenfranchised—and very likely deceased—antecessors. Men of lower status, and their families, were also impacted by the seismic changes the Conquest brought to England's towns. The Conqueror's program of castle building and the destruction of property that it brought about is perhaps the most oft cited example of these changes. *Domesday* tells us that the Conqueror built castles at Cambridge, Canterbury, Gloucester, Huntingdon, Lincoln, Norwich, Shrewsbury, Stamford, Wallingford, Warwick, and York and the construction of those castles caused the demolition of at least 410 houses in those towns.⁹⁶ Beyond the construction of castles, England's post-Conquest towns were also subject to other significant alterations of their topography, including the construction of new cathedrals, the laying out of new markets, and the digging of ditches.⁹⁷ Canterbury is an excellent example of the different types of changes that English towns experienced after the Conquest. In 1066, King Edward had fifty-one burgesses paying rent in Canterbury but in 1086 the king received rent from only nineteen

⁹⁶ C.G. Harfield, "A Hand-List of Castles Recorded in the Domesday Book," *The English Historical Review*, 106 (1991), 371-92, at 373-4.

⁹⁷ Darby, *Domesday England*, 295-7, Palliser, Slater and Dennison, "The Cambridge Urban History," 160-1.

burgesses.⁹⁸ Seven of Canterbury's burghal residences had been given to the archbishop, fourteen had been traded to the Abbot of St. Augustine's in return for the site of the castle, and eleven were "waste in the town ditch."⁹⁹

The topographic changes visited upon the post-Conquest towns could be devastating to the townspeople affected. In 1086, Norwich had only 665 of the 1320 burgess it had had during Edward the Confessor's reign.¹⁰⁰ It was also recorded as having had "480 *bordarii* who, because of their poverty, pay no customary dues."¹⁰¹ Although we are told that thirty-two of Norwich's burgesses moved to the new borough and 98 households were displaced by the new castle, there is no indication of any other event that would have displaced or taken the lives of over six hundred men.¹⁰² It is more than reasonable, then, to assume that, rather than having acquired 480 new people and lost 655 existing ones, these *bordarii* had somehow fallen from the ranks of Norwich's burgesses—most likely through the devastation of their homes. The plight of these 480 men shows how transitive economic and legal status really was in post-Conquest towns. In the span of twenty years these former Norwich burgesses had lost either the measure of wealth or property that had allowed them to be considered burgesses.

Despite the ample evidence of dislocation and destruction, the post-Conquest changes taking place in England's towns cannot be taken as signaling

⁹⁸ *DB*, 2r.

⁹⁹ *DB*, 2r.

¹⁰⁰ *DB*, ii, 116v.

¹⁰¹ *DB*, ii, 116v.

¹⁰² *DB*, ii, 116r.

their overall economic decline. To the contrary, the increase in their renders shows that during the two-decades following the Conquest the value of property in England's towns increased dramatically. In the south, the obligations for the whole manor of Steyning increased from £86 in 1066 to £100 in 1086, Lewes went from £26 to £34, Sandwich from £40 to £50, and Dover from £18 to £54.¹⁰³ In the east, Norwich, despite the noted poverty of some of its residents, exploded in value from £30 during the reign of Edward to just over £90 in 1086.¹⁰⁴ In the upper Thames valley, Wallingford and Oxfords valuations both increased from £30 to £60 and Wallingford actually rendered £80 in 1086.¹⁰⁵ In the west, Gloucester went from paying £36 to paying £60 as well as £20 from its mint.¹⁰⁶ In the Midlands, Worcester went from paying £18 to £23.5s and Leicester from £30 to £42.10s.¹⁰⁷ In the north, York's render increased from £53 to £100 in the span of twenty years— even after one of its six contributing shires had been laid to waste to build the castle.¹⁰⁸

Beyond the Norman tenants-in-chief who gained property in England's towns during the Conquest, there must have been others who profited from the changes taking place. In order for the king and the other great landlords to receive their inflated rents, there must have been lesser elites, merchants, and craftsmen who were benefitting from the increased trade taking place in England's towns at the end of the eleventh century. Even if some percentage

¹⁰³ *DB*, 17r, 25v, 3r, 1r.

¹⁰⁴ *DB*, ii, 117r,v.

¹⁰⁵ *DB*, 56r,v, 154r.

¹⁰⁶ *DB*, 162r.

¹⁰⁷ *DB*, 172r, 230r.

¹⁰⁸ *DB*, 298r.

of the increased renders can be attributed to a harsher and more efficient Norman regime, it does not explain the widespread and often substantial increases in payments from England's towns. Simply put, even the hardest pressed burgesses could not conjure pennies from the sky. The townsmen who were getting flush in the late eleventh-century towns were the antipodes of those men of Norwich pushed into poverty by upheavals of the Conquest.

The struggle to control England's towns during the land-rush that followed the Conquest was a just a foreshadowing of the boom period of town foundation that would take place in the twelfth century.¹⁰⁹ Just as the first centuries of the evolution of England's Anglo-Saxon towns had been influenced by their interactions with foreigners, the post-Conquest towns would be defined by their relationships with their new Norman lords. And trade, which had generated such wealth during the preceding centuries, would continue to be the mainstay of England's towns under the Normans; so much so that William Fitz Stephen, echoing the Venerable Bede, would, in his twelfth-century *Description of London*, state that the city was "renown" for its "wealth, extensive trade and commerce" and that "merchants from every nation under heaven are pleased to bring to the city ships full of merchandise."¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹ Britnell, "The Cambridge Urban History," 107-9.

¹¹⁰ William Fitz Stephen, *Description of London*, ed. F. D. Logan (New York, N.Y., 1990), 47.

Appendix A.

Scoring of Sites Against Biddle's Town Criteria During the Reign of Æthelstan

	Defenses	Planned Street System	Market	Mint	Legal Autonomy	Central Place	Large and Dense Population	Diversified Economic Base	Plots and Houses of an 'Urban' Type	Social Differentiation	Complex Religious Organization	Judicial Center
London	Yes			Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Canterbury	Yes			Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Ipswich	Yes			Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
York	Yes			Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Rochester	yes			Yes		Yes			Yes	Yes		
Axbridge	Yes			Yes								
Bath	Yes			Yes		Yes						
Bridport	Yes			Yes								
Buckingham	Yes			Yes		Yes						
Burpham	Yes			Yes								
Chichester	Yes			Yes								
Chisbury	Yes											
Cricklade	Yes			Yes								
Eashing	Yes											
Eorpeburnan	Yes											
Exeter	Yes			Yes		Yes		Yes	Yes			
Halwell	Yes											
Hastings	Yes											
Langport	Yes			Yes								
Lewes	Yes			Yes				Yes				
Lydford	Yes			Yes								
Lyng	Yes											
Malmesbury	Yes			Yes								

Oxford	Yes			Yes		Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes		
Pilton/[B. that is Barnstaple]	Yes											
Portchester	Yes											
Sashes	Yes											
Shaftesbury	Yes			Yes								
Southampton	Yes			Yes				Yes	Yes			
Southwark	Yes			Yes								
Twynam (Christchurch)	Yes											
Wallingford	Yes			Yes		Yes						
Wareham	Yes			Yes								
Warwick	Yes			Yes								
Watchet	Yes			Yes								
Wilton	Yes			Yes								
Winchester	Yes			Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Worcester	Yes			Yes							Yes	

Appendix B.

Burh Usage in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle

Word/part	Location	Year	MS	Usage	Burghal Hidage
Byrig	Glastonbury	688	A	Glæstingabyrig	
Byrig	London	872	A	Lundunbyrig	
Byrig	London	893	A	Lundunbyrig	
Byrig	Shoebury	893	A	Sceobyrig	
Byrig	Various	893	A	geweorcum wæron, of ælcra byrig	
byrig	London	893	A	Lundunbyrig	
byrig	London	895	A	Lundunbyrig	
byrig	London	895	A	Pa þæs on hærfæste þa wicode se cyng on neaweste þare byrig, þa hwile þe hie hira corn gerypon	
byrig	London	895	A	Lundunbyrig	
byrig	London	895	A	Lundunbyrig	
byrig	Badbury	900	A	Baddanbyrig	
byrig	Aylesbury	917	A	Æglesbyrig	
byrig	Wigmore	917	A	byrig æt Wigingamere	
byrig	Maldon	917	A	also refered to as þa burg	
byrig	Stamford	918	A	also refered to as þa burg	

burg	Rome	409	A	Romeburg	
burg	Limbury	571	A	Lygeanburg	
burg	Aylesbury	571	A	Ægelesburg	
burg	Canterbury	754	A	Cantwaraburg	
burg	Canterbury	851	A	Contwaraburg	
burg	London	851	A	Lundenburg	
burg	London	886	A	Lundenburg	
burg	London	886	A	burg	
burg	Varius	893	A	burgum	
burg	Varius	893	A	burga	
burg	London	893	A	burgwarum	
burg	Exeter	893	A	burg	Yes
burg	Chichester	894	A	burgware	Yes
burg	London	895	A	burgwara	
burg	Hertford	912	A	burg	
burg	Witham	912	A	burg	
burg	Hertford	912	A	burg	
burg	Varius	914	A	burgum	
burg	Buckingham	914	A	burga	
burg	Bedford	915	A	burg	
burg	Bedford	915	A	burgware	
burg	Maldon	916	A	burg	
burg	Towcester	917	A	burg	
burg	Wigingamere/wigmore?	917	A	burg	
burg	Towcester	917	A	burg	
burg	Towcester	917	A	burg	
burg	Varius	917	A	burgum	
burg	Tempsford	917	A	burg also referred to as geweorc	
burg	Varius	917	A	burgum	
burg	Colchester	917	A	burg	
burg	Maldon	917	A	burg	
burg	Maldon	917	A	burgwarum	
burg	Maldon	917	A	burg	
burg	Towcester	917	A	burg	
burg	Huntingdon	917	A	burg	
burg	Colchester	917	A	burg	

burg	Stamford	918	A	burg	
burg	Tamworth	918	A	burg	
burg	Nottingham	918	A	burg	
burg	Thelwall	919	A	burg	
burg	Nottingham	920	A	burg	
burg	Nottingham	920	A	burgum	
burg	Bakewell	920	A	burg	
burh	Bamburh	547	A	Bebbanburh	

Appendix C.

Burh Usage in the Old English Orosius

City	Word	Page
A Scythian Town	<i>burh</i>	22
A Town in Boetia	<i>byrig</i>	48
Agrigentum	<i>burg</i>	105
Alexandria	<i>byrig</i>	8
Alexandria	<i>burg</i>	69
Alexandria	<i>burg</i>	71
Alexandria	<i>byrig</i>	135
Alexandria	<i>byrig</i>	142
Alexandria	<i>byrig</i>	147
Antioch	<i>byrig</i>	153
Aquileia	<i>byrig</i>	143
Aquileia	<i>byrig</i>	154
Arcadia	<i>burg</i>	55
Argento	<i>byrig</i>	92
Argos	<i>burg</i>	86
Asculum	<i>burg</i>	124
Asian Towns	<i>byrig</i>	70
Atalante	<i>burg</i>	51
Athens	<i>byrig</i>	24
Athens	<i>burg</i>	51
Athens	<i>burg</i>	53
Athens	<i>byrg</i>	54
Athens	<i>burg</i>	55
Athens	<i>byrig</i>	55
Athens	<i>burg</i>	55

Babylon	<i>burg</i>	36
Babylon	<i>burg</i>	37
Babylon	<i>burg</i>	37
Babylon	<i>burg</i>	37
Babylon	<i>byrig</i>	37
Babylon	<i>burg</i>	43
Babylon	<i>burg</i>	43
Babylon	<i>burg</i>	43
Babylon	<i>burg</i>	43
Babylon	<i>burg</i>	43
Babylon	<i>burg</i>	43
Babylon	<i>burg</i>	44
Babylon	<i>byrig</i>	132
Babylon and Rome	<i>byrg</i>	38
Brigantia	<i>burh</i>	19
Bura	<i>byrig</i>	56
Byzantium	<i>burg</i>	63
Byzantium	<i>burg</i>	64
Byzantium	<i>burg</i>	64
Byzantium	<i>burg</i>	64
Caenina	<i>burg</i>	39
Caenina	<i>burg</i>	39
Camarina	<i>byrg</i>	92
Capua	<i>byrg</i>	104
Carthage	<i>byrig</i>	88
Carthage	<i>burg</i>	89
Carthage	<i>byrig</i>	90
Carthage	<i>byrig</i>	91
Carthage	<i>byrg</i>	91
Carthage	<i>byrig</i>	104
Carthage	<i>byrig</i>	105
Carthage	<i>byrg</i>	106
Carthage	<i>burg</i>	111
Carthage	<i>burg</i>	112
Carthage	<i>burg</i>	112

Carthage	<i>burg</i>	112
Carthage	<i>burg</i>	112
Carthage	<i>burg</i>	112
Carthage	<i>byrig</i>	112
Carthage	<i>burg</i>	113
Carthage	<i>burg</i>	119
Carthage	<i>burg</i>	133
Carthaginian Towns	<i>byrg</i>	91
Carthaginian Towns	<i>byrg</i>	95
Cinam (Eryx)	<i>byrg</i>	96
Towns of Persia	<i>byrig</i>	33
Towns of the Cherronesus	<i>byrg</i>	64
Town of King Ambira	<i>burg</i>	73
Town of King Ambira	<i>burg</i>	73
Town of King Ambira	<i>byrg</i>	73
Carthage	<i>burg</i>	93
Constantinople	<i>byrg</i>	9
Constantinople	<i>byrig</i>	18
Constantinople	<i>byrig</i>	18
Constantinople	<i>burg</i>	56
Constantinople	<i>burg</i>	149
Constantinople	<i>byrig</i>	153
Constantinople	<i>byrig</i>	
Ctesiphon	<i>byrig</i>	150
Ephesus	<i>burg</i>	30
Greek towns	<i>burg</i>	62
Greek towns	<i>byrig</i>	62
Greek towns	<i>byrig</i>	62
Greek towns	<i>byrig</i>	63
Greek towns	<i>byrig</i>	66
Guelma	<i>byrig</i>	120
Hadrumentum, Zeugis, Carthage	<i>burh</i>	20
Helice	<i>byrig</i>	56
Jerusalem	<i>burg</i>	138
Jerusalem	<i>burg</i>	140

Lamia	<i>byrg</i>	78
Larissa	<i>burg</i>	61
Lyon	<i>byrig</i>	150
Lysimachia	<i>burg</i>	82
Mainz	<i>byrig</i>	143
Many Towns	<i>burh</i>	117
Marsala	<i>burh</i>	21
Milan	<i>burg</i>	99
Messena	<i>burg</i>	14
Messina	<i>burh</i>	21
Messina	<i>burg</i>	35
Milan	<i>byrig</i>	145
Milan	<i>byrig</i>	147
Milan	<i>byrig</i>	155
Minturnae	<i>byrg</i>	117
Minturnae	<i>byrg</i>	121
Minturnae	<i>byrg</i>	121
Nicea & Bucephale	<i>byrg</i>	72
Nicomedia	<i>byrig</i>	149
Nisibis	<i>burg</i>	151
Numantia	<i>burg</i>	117
Numantia	<i>byrig</i>	117
Olynthus	<i>burg</i>	63
Olynthus	<i>burg</i>	63
Othoni	<i>burg</i>	62
Othoni	<i>burg</i>	62
Pelorus	<i>burh</i>	21
Persepolis	<i>burg</i>	70
Persepolis	<i>byrg</i>	70
Ravenna	<i>burg</i>	145
Ravenna	<i>burg</i>	148
Ravenna	<i>byrig</i>	148
Rimini	<i>byrg</i>	98
Rome	<i>burg</i>	31
Rome	<i>byrig</i>	39

Rome	<i>byrig</i>	39
Rome	<i>byrig</i>	40
Rome	<i>burg</i>	41
Rome	<i>byrig</i>	42
Rome	<i>byrig</i>	42
Rome	<i>byrig</i>	51
Rome	<i>burg</i>	52
Rome	<i>burg</i>	52
Rome	<i>burg</i>	52
Rome	<i>burg</i>	52
Rome	<i>byrig</i>	52
Rome	<i>byrig</i>	52
Rome	<i>burg</i>	57
Rome	<i>byrig</i>	57
Rome	<i>burg</i>	86
Rome	<i>byrg</i>	96
Rome	<i>byrg</i>	101
Rome	<i>burg</i>	103
Rome	<i>byrg</i>	103
Rome	<i>byrig</i>	103
Rome	<i>byrig</i>	115
Rome	<i>burg</i>	120
Rome	<i>byrig</i>	120
Rome	<i>byrig</i>	128
Rome	<i>byrig</i>	137
Rome	<i>byrig</i>	144
Rome	<i>byrig</i>	156
Saguntum	<i>burg</i>	99
Sart	<i>burg</i>	68
Seleucia	<i>byrig</i>	140
Sidon	<i>burg</i>	58
Smyrna	<i>byrg</i>	125
Sodom and Gomorah	<i>byrig</i>	22
Sogdian Rock	<i>byrg</i>	72
Sparta	<i>byrig</i>	31

Sparta	<i>byrg</i>	46
Sparta	<i>byrg</i>	46
Sparta	<i>byrig</i>	54
Sparta	<i>byrg</i>	55
Sparta	<i>burg</i>	154
Sulcanum	<i>burg</i>	110
Syracuse	<i>byrig</i>	91
Syracuse	<i>burg</i>	103
Taranto	<i>byrg</i>	83
Taranto	<i>byrg</i>	105
Taranto	<i>byrig</i>	123
Taranto	<i>burg</i>	84
Taranto	<i>burg</i>	105
Tarsus	<i>byrg</i>	68
Tarsus	<i>burg</i>	69
Tarsus	<i>byrig</i>	69
Tarsus	<i>byrig</i>	149
Towns of Asia and Europe	<i>byrig</i>	30
Theodosia	<i>byrig</i>	8
Thessaly	<i>byrig</i>	24
Towns of Sri Lanka	<i>byrg</i>	9
Towns of Taranto	<i>byrg</i>	83
Troy	<i>burg</i>	31
Troy	<i>byrig</i>	31
Troy	<i>burg</i>	38
Tuscia	<i>burg</i>	51
Tuscia	<i>burg</i>	51
Tuscia	<i>burg</i>	51
Tuscia	<i>burg</i>	52
Tyre	<i>burg</i>	70
Tyre	<i>burg</i>	90
Utica	<i>byrg</i>	106
Varius towns	<i>byrig</i>	117
Veii	<i>burg</i>	51
Veii	<i>burg</i>	51

Vei	<i>byrig</i>	51

Appendix D.

Occurrences of *Burgerefa* or derivations thereof in the *Old English*

Martyrology

Kotzor #	Date	Saint	OE Title	Reeve's Name	Town
3	25-Dec	Eugenia	<i>Romeburge gerefa</i>	Nicetius	Rome
7	31-Dec	Pope Sylvester I	<i>Romeburge gerefa</i>	Tarquinius	Rome
30	21-Jan	Agnes	<i>Romeburge gerefa</i>	Symphronius	Rome
30	21-Jan	Agnes	<i>Burhgerefan</i>	Symphronius	Rome
41	9-Mar	Forty Soldiers	<i>burge gerefa</i>	Agricolaus	Sebastia
64	14-Apr	Valerianus, Tiburtius, Maximus	<i>Romeburge gerefa</i>	Almachius	Rome
94	31-May	Petronilla	<i>Romeburge gerefa</i>	Flaccus	Rome
112	25-Jun	Luceia, Auceia	<i>Romeburge gerefa</i>	Unknown	Rome
161	22-Aug	Timothy	<i>burge gerefa, burhgerefan</i>	Tarquinius	Rome
166	28-Aug	Hermes	<i>Romeburge gerefa</i>	Hermes	Rome
170	30-Aug	Felix of Thibiuca	<i>burge gerefa</i>	Unknown	Venusia
182	11-Sep	Protus, Hyacinth	<i>Romeburge gerefa</i>	Nicetius	Rome
227	22-Nov	Cecilia	<i>Romeburge gerefa</i>	Almachius	Rome

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